WAYS OF ACCEPTING DIFFERENCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF MODERN NON-MORMON IMMIGRANTS TO SALT LAKE CITY

by

Anne-Marie Waddell

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Anne-Marie Waddell

This thesis has been read by each member of the following supervisory committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

4/14/00 _____
Chair: Karen Dace

4/14/00 _____
Mary Strine

4/14/00 _____
Mark McPhail

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I have read the thesis of Anne-Marie Waddell in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent and acceptable; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the supervisory committee and is ready for submission to The Graduate School.

4/14/00
Date

Karen Dace
Chair, Supervisory Committee

Approved for the Major Department

Connie Bullis
Chair/Dean

Approved for the Graduate Council

David S. Chapman
Dean of The Graduate School

ABSTRACT

This thesis begins to examine the ways that marginality and prejudice are formed. Specifically this study examines marginality and prejudice formation through identifying ways that differences are accepted. As an introduction, this study begins with the question of how cultures that profess openness and acceptance as their standard fall into the trap of marginalizing other cultures. After tracing the possible causes of this phenomenon, the literature review explores the characteristics of culture which lead to some conclusions about how marginalization occurs. Another point emphasized is the value of ethnography as a means of understanding the formation of marginalization in not only others but also in the ethnographer.

To further understand the ways differences are accepted, ethnographic research consisted of interviewing couples who have moved Salt Lake City, UT within the last five years. The headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormon church) and predominated by Mormon culture, heritage, and politics, Salt Lake City is a unique cultural site, providing the opportunity for the ethnographer to study a convergence of cultures among one heavily dominant culture. The couples interviewed were not Mormon church members and had never lived in a predominately Mormon culture before. They described their experiences and feelings in moving to Utah in the interviews.

One important distinction that arose from the interviews was the difference between the Reactive perspective of culture and the Judgmental perspective of culture. Respondents at any given time either spoke from the perspective of the marginalized culture, perhaps seeking acceptance through their comments, or from the perspective of the dominant culture, perhaps assuming an inherent right to judge what differences are acceptable.

Results from the interviews indicate that differences are accepted through four methods: 1) minimizing, 2) assimilating/associating with, 3) transcending, or 4) eliminating the differences. In the diversity of specific ways that the respondents accepted the differences they encountered in Salt Lake City, their responses fell into one of the above four categories or a combination of the categories. The responses also indicated some barriers to accepting difference.

In conclusion, forming the I-You relationships Martin Buber discusses is an effective way to accept difference and thus an effective way to overcome marginalization.

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INTRODUCTION

The Marginalization Process

The tendency to marginalize or to be prejudiced is not limited to a certain group of people. Even those who despise and struggle against marginality and prejudice fall easily into this trap. The process that leads to marginalization and prejudice often has innocent, harmless, or at least natural beginnings. My assumption is that though the tendency to marginalize may be so ingrained that it becomes naturalized, it can be changed through conscious effort. Understanding the formation of marginalization may be an effective starting point for this conscious change.

Stuart Hall quotes Richard Dyer in making a distinction between *typing* and *stereotyping*: *typing* is used to make sense of things. Hall gives an example of knowing something about a person through that person's roles (my boss, a lover, my neighbor, a politician). These roles are *types*, and Dyer argues they are necessary to the production of meaning. "*A type* is any simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characterization in which a few traits are foregrounded and change or development is kept to a minimum" (quoted in Hall "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" 257), while "*stereotypes* get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity" (Hall "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" 258). Hall continues with two additional aspects of

stereotyping: first, stereotyping tends to split things, dividing the acceptable from the unacceptable—everything fits into one binary or the other; and second, stereotyping is most common where there are inequalities of power.

In cases where inequalities of power exist, typing subtly and easily turns to stereotyping as people try to make sense of their world and determine what to accept as good and what to avoid or even tear down.

Robert Prus sheds further light on why stereotyping so naturally occurs: "all meaningful essences, including the more solitary experiences of (linguistic) members of human groups, derive from or are built on comprehensions of 'the reality of the other'" (Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research 15). In accordance with Prus's theory, stereotyping, rather than typing, more easily allows one to determine "meaningful essences" because stereotyping more clearly distinguishes the 'Other'.

However Prus's theory leads to another point, that is, that stereotyping, or creating the reality of the 'Other', is not only a way to make sense of the world, but also a way to define one's identity, albeit a faulty way. If, through the process of stereotyping, a binary seems to exist where the poles are acceptable and unacceptable, one automatically associates herself or himself with one of those binary poles. In addition, where power inequality exists, acceptability is associated with power. Associating with the "acceptable" pole, and in doing so promoting the idea that what is outside the power group is unacceptable, subtly becomes more important than avoiding prejudice, and marginalization naturally occurs.

While discussing the process of *defining a self*, the process of change that psychotherapy patients go through to become more independent and thus more functional, Michael Kerr says that "most people want to be individuals, but not everyone is willing to give up togetherness to achieve more individuality. People frequently are willing to be individuals only to the extent that the relationship system approves and permits it" (46). Kerr's observation implies that in constructing and maintaining their self-identities, people frequently would rather identify with the "acceptable" or dominant group, thus maintaining the idea that there is an 'acceptable group', than achieve individuality. In sum, adding to the incentive to stereotype rather than simply type, is the need/desire people may feel to avoid individuality if it conflicts with identification with the 'acceptable group'. The 'acceptable group' is the dominant group, except that the term 'acceptable group' connotes that those outside the bounds of this group nevertheless recognize this group's reality as acceptable.

This naturally leads to hegemony, "a form of power based on leadership by a group in many fields of activity at once, so that its ascendancy commands widespread consent and appears natural and inevitable" (Hall "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" 259). When an idea (in the form of an opinion, an attitude, or a judgment) is adopted by the 'acceptable group' (dominant group), it potentially gains, through hegemony, consent from those outside the 'acceptable group'. This widespread consent from those both within and outside the 'acceptable group' disguises the idea as a fact. The idea becomes perceived reality; it becomes naturalized. Even those who are not part of the 'acceptable group' accept this "reality". As an example, Hall quotes from Edward Said's study of how

Europe constructed a stereotypical image of 'the Orient': "'Orientalism' was the *discourse* 'by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively . . .' Within the framework of western hegemony over the Orient . . . there emerged a new object of knowledge" (259). Hegemonization of an idea thus naturalizes the idea, formulating it into a way of knowing.

Prejudice and marginalization, among people who not only claim open-mindedness and belief in equality but who also genuinely desire it, result from this hegemonization process since what the 'acceptable group' dictates appears to be not just arbitrary but "natural and inevitable," a way of knowing. Two forces work against a nonprejudiced, demarginalized community: the human desire to identify self with the 'acceptable group' (so strong a desire that individuality is often sacrificed), and the hegemonization or naturalization of attitudes about difference and about what is acceptable.

Trapped by the Mormons

The title of an early black and white movie, *Trapped by the Mormons*, humorously reminds one of Utah's reputation. Because of its dominant religious culture, Salt Lake City, Utah provides a unique place to study the problems of marginality and prejudice. Salt Lake City is large enough to be compared to other cities in the world, but it is different from most other cities in the world because its culture is so heavily dominated by a religion that is the minority most anywhere else in the world. Since recent census data does not report on religious preference, the LDS church (Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-Day Saints or Mormon church) has the most accurate data on the Mormon population in the Salt Lake area. According to LDS church records, Salt Lake County's population is 62-65% LDS. LDS church records report a slightly less accurate percentage of 49 for the LDS population in Salt Lake City proper. (The LDS church cannot as accurately determine the population of Salt Lake City proper because its congregation boundaries do not correspond with Salt Lake City boundaries; whereas Mormon congregation boundaries correspond more closely with boundaries for Salt Lake County.) Though there are members of the LDS church all over the world today, when the religion was organized in the 1830s, its members rallied together. For example, people who joined the church in Europe left their homes to join the body of Mormons in the United States. The LDS church had its beginnings in New York, but the Mormons were driven out of New York. They kept traveling west as they were driven from their homes and communities in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. Until the 1970s, a law existed in Missouri stating that it was legal to kill a Mormon. Like other marginalized groups, for example the Japanese-Americans during World War II, Mormons were not protected as citizens of their own country, yet they were asked during the Spanish American war to defend their country. Because of the Mormon church's exclusionary history, the heritage that is handed down to its constituents often includes the awareness that like many marginalized groups, they have to prove that they can fit into the 'acceptable group', that they are "normal."

This heritage is perpetuated when LDS missionaries come home from one-and-one-half to two-year missions with stories of being shunned, persecuted, and ignored. This

treatment is so common-place, that it is not only expected, but even accepted: some missionaries laugh about it and some even develop pride in how much they can take. It is also common-place among LDS church members to discuss feelings of shame or feelings of needing to hide their religion in some groups, or even with their friends. The struggle to become part of the 'acceptable group' or to show that they are part of the 'acceptable group' pervades the Mormon culture even in Mormon-dominated Salt Lake City. A common phrase heard among Mormon groups is "Show them you're a real person and that we don't have horns on our heads."

Yet, in Utah and specifically in Salt Lake City, the Mormon often is part of the 'acceptable group' while those who are not Mormon are often ostracized. Religiously and socially, Mormonism often pervades as the naturalized, dominant culture in Salt Lake City. Most everyone, Mormon and non-Mormon, assumes I am talking about Mormon experiences when I talk about "my mission," when I say I am going to the temple, or when I tell them I am the Relief Society President. In the workplace or in public places, discussions commonly include phrases like "when I was on my mission," "Where did you go on your mission?" "she married a nonmember," "he's not a member of 'the church'," "they don't go to church, not active," (always assumed Mormon church), "What ward (congregation) are you in?" Much like saying "She's a woman doctor" or "a Black actor," or "a gay teacher," Mormons will point out in conversation that someone is not a member or use phrases like "my nonmember friend" or "a non-Mormon doctor". Thus the Mormon in Salt Lake City fills the role of *acceptable*. In many subcultures, the Mormon finds it natural to see the non-Mormon as *unacceptable*—even in subtle ways that are not

obviously prejudiced, but that stereotype nevertheless, reducing everything about the non-Mormon to several traits, exaggerating and simplifying them, and fixing them without change or development to eternity, regardless of the diversity of non-Mormons in Salt Lake City. In fact, the Mormon in Salt Lake City experiences something like what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing experienced as an American ethnographer of Jewish and Chinese heritage among the Indonesian Meratus: "someone of minority heritage, yet, compared to the Meratus . . . a privileged Westerner" (McMillen A10).

As a result of hegemonization, "we often treat our cultural knowledge as common sense, as something 'natural' beyond question," (Geertz quoted in Gonzalez, Houston, Chen xvi). Upon relocating to Salt Lake City, non-Mormons, those who have been part of the dominant culture anywhere else they have lived, could experience the negative side of Mormon cultural knowledge being treated as common sense. That is, they could find themselves on the "other" side of the difference fence as they learn that what was always acceptable, such as their religious preference, may not be anymore. Non-Mormons who move to Salt Lake City potentially have a new vantage point of the 'Other', giving them the unique opportunity to redefine their societies, themselves, and their definitions of *other* and *normal*. At the inception of this study, it is their vantage point that I hoped would help define what makes difference acceptable.

It is against this backdrop that I situated my study. I explore factors that make difference acceptable through the crossroads of cultures found in Salt Lake City, through the eyes of modern non-Mormon immigrants to Salt Lake City, and necessarily through my eyes as the ethnographer. Through this study I hoped to provide insights into issues

and questions of marginality by understanding others and myself better. Because my approach is ethnographic, the goal is less to answer questions definitively and more to refine and complicate questions that will lead to new insights into marginality, and even to more questions. Though the results of my study are not generalizable to all people or situations, the concepts derived from the people and situations in my study should provide tools that could apply to other people and situations.

Culture Is Hybrid and Fluid: Theoretical Assumptions

David Chaney discusses the concept of culture, saying that it "is fascinating but often puzzling because it has been used in several distinctive ways." He goes on to imply that a debate exists among anthropologists, historians, sociologists and literary theorists, among others, as to how culture is to be understood (2). Considering this lack of consensus on how culture should be defined, I will use culture in this paper to mean the set of rules that govern what is valued and what is acceptable among a group of people. As Chaney puts it, "the key move here is to go from saying that culture is the general name for the available means of expression for any one person, with which presumably everybody would agree, to saying that the forms of culture determine what *can be expressed*" (32). Yet culture is also the process of determining what those rules are, and as such is an evolving entity.

Culture as I have defined it is hybrid and fluid. As different groups struggle and negotiate for power and as cultures clash and intersect, the set of rules that govern what is acceptable changes as new ideas become hegemonized. Traditionally the study of cultures

is motivated by an attempt to understand a group of people as a whole. This makes the study of cultures problematic because it denies the individuality, complexity, and unpredictability of individuals and social interactions. Nevertheless some scholars, James Clifford, Kathleen Stewart, and Chaney among them, illustrate that cultural studies can accommodate individuality, complexity, and unpredictability by redefining culture as a hybrid, fluid entity. Culture is not static, but rather "is taken to be generative or productive of meanings for ordinary experience," an explanation that emphasizes a need for the definition of culture to encompass hybridity and fluidity (Chaney 43).

Culture defined as such, scholars must generalize their studies of culture at the local level because culture is hybrid, a place where various cultural influences overlap and come together, and because culture is fluid, a process continuously being re-created. That is, because culture can never be fully represented, its most accurate representation is at the micro level.

Equipped with this understanding of culture, anthropologists, sociologists, and ethnographers approach the study of cultures with the assumption that they will never capture a culture in its entirety. They will only capture aspects of overlapping culture at specific times. A local study focused on a few non-Mormon couples will not represent Salt Lake City groups, or non-Mormon Salt Lake City groups, or Mormon groups. Rather it will provide insights and questions that *may* apply to other groups and individuals.

In his essay, "On Collecting Art and Culture," James Clifford quotes Claude Levi-Strauss who, sitting in the New York Public Library, "'sat near an Indian in a feather headdress and a beaded buckskin jacket—who was taking notes with a Parker pen'" (67).

Though Levi-Strauss saw the Indian as a remnant of an extinct culture, "as a kind of incongruous parody," Clifford points out that many Native Americans at that time "were in the process of reconstituting themselves culturally and politically" and that the Indian in the library may have actually been "a glimpse of another future" (70). The Indian in the library is hybrid, and if he is an example of culture, culture itself is hybrid, a collection in itself of varied influences. Clifford also questions the notion of an essential native in his essay "Traveling Cultures" by making it clear that many so-called natives are culturally unique. He calls Squanto "a disconcertingly hybrid 'native.'" And of other "natives" he says, "a great many of these interlocutors, complex individuals routinely made to speak for 'cultural' knowledge, turn out to have their own 'ethnographic' proclivities and interesting histories of travel" (97). Mormons and non-Mormons in Salt Lake, though they stereotype each other and though I make generalizations about the cultural climate in Salt Lake, are also hybrid. My examples represent only parts of some peoples' attitudes and feelings.

Kathleen Stewart effectively captures the hybridity of Appalachian culture and its construction in her ethnography, A Space on the Side of the Road, by combining the dialogue of her subjects, her observations, and historical logistics. She shows that the culture of the people who live in Appalachia is a hybrid of politics, economics, history, individuals, and topography; that they create their culture by incorporating a variety of influences. "Where one seeks sleek surfaces and finished objects, the 'other' [represented by the people of Appalachia] amasses fragments" (42). Quoting Benjamin, she describes Appalachia as "a space-time littered with ruins and named *places* in which 'history has

physically merged into the setting'" (90). She refers to Appalachia as a "doubly occupied place" because it is occupied by ambiguity. It is constructed as both a threat to civilized cultures and a nostalgic utopia, as a result of industry and a result of exploitation, and the people who live there construct their culture in between the polarities, living with "the tension of a place poised precariously on an edge" (107). She discusses how "the hills found themselves caught in the wild swings of wildness and order, stability and eruptions of violence," but how even her description is only one way of capturing the culture because of its hybrid nature (106).

Stewart gives examples of two opposing views of Appalachia: an idyllic view and a demonic view; she then juxtaposes this with the discourse of a woman who lives there and illustrates the inaccuracy of both. She begins by quoting an idyllic scene from Blue Highways, where the author, idealizing the Appalachian community, expresses feelings of being welcome and describes the scenery in enough detail that readers sense they understand the "gist" of the place. Next, Stewart describes the nightmarish story told in the book Deliverance, which paints a picture of degeneracy, lawlessness, and depravity in the wild as compared to order in the city (120). Finally, she recounts Sissy Miller's discourse. Sissy thinks a parking lot should be built on old man Henson's lawn because he keeps chasing kids off of it (121). Her dialogue contradicts the idyllic view because parking lots are not idyllic, and neither is old man Henson chasing kids off his lawn. Her dialogue contradicts the demonic view because she expresses her idea of orderliness and neighborliness. Sissy Miller's narrative is an example of how her culture is hybrid.

Cultures in Salt Lake City are also hybrid. Mormons may struggle to negotiate a place between stereotypes, both idyllic and demonic, between roles of oppressor and roles of oppressed, between their motivations and their perceived motivations. Non-Mormons may struggle to negotiate local culture with what they have experienced outside of Salt Lake City, to negotiate what they have always accepted with what is accepted in Salt Lake City, to negotiate their identity and how that relates to what is accepted in Salt Lake City.

Hybridity is implied in David Chaney's argument that culture should be studied through local cultural practice. Speaking of how individuals control the time and place of media performances through technology, Chaney says "it becomes clearer that individual appropriation as local cultural practice is a form of electronic collage. These collages are composed of fragments drawn from personal odysseys through infinite layers of representation in performance" (212). Thus, studying the local cultural practice is important because it accounts for hybridity, the infinite layers of representation involved in culture. Chaney views culture as style that is performed "in relation both to a set of cultural objects and to an individual or group's way of using those objects . . . [culture as a style] is an approximate characterization and can encompass significant exceptions, modifications and developments through time" (207). Following Chaney's reasoning, culture is not only hybrid, but fluid—changing through time.

Clifford also sees culture as fluid: "[culture] changes and develops like a living organism" ("On Collecting Art and Culture" 64). He extends this idea to individuals who supposedly represent culture: "the people [as an example of cultures] studied by

anthropologists have seldom been homebodies" ("Traveling Cultures" 97). In other words, not only do people travel in and out of places, but in doing so, they travel in and out of cultures. Not only are individuals culturally hybrid, but they are also culturally fluid. Clifford's use of a hotel as a representation/chronotope of modernity is effective as an illustration that culture is fluid because people pass in and out of hotels and because the hotel is "a different place of inauthenticity, exile, transience, rootlessness," a place of fluidity ("Traveling Cultures" 96).

Because "hegemony is never permanent," hegemonic ideas have fluctuated in Salt Lake City (Hall 48). Mormon women living in Salt Lake City in the nineteenth century were criticized by their non-Mormon neighbors who "saw the alliance of their Mormon neighbors with the radical suffragists as unwomanly. Typical of the conservative, genteel matrons who formed the American mainstream, they espoused traditional values of home and family" (Derr, Cannon, Beecher 138). The first woman senator in the United States was from Utah, Martha Hughes Cannon, a polygamist who defeated her husband in the state senatorial race. Mormon woman today are more likely to be criticized not for associating with radical political activists, but rather for being too conservative, or as expressed in a recent Sixty Minutes program highlighting Mormonism, for being subservient to men.

Stewart tells her readers to "imagine culture itself as an act of poesis—a creation that works through an act of mediation" (29). In other words, ". . . we can imagine culture as a process," (5) ". . . not as a finished text to be read or as a transparent 'object' that can be abstracted into a fixed representation but as a texted interpretive space in itself"(26). Of

history she says, "imagine history not as an accomplished fact or a formless tendency but as an occupied space of contingency and desire in which people roam . . . a process of being hit by events" (90). If history is an aspect of culture, then at least one aspect of culture is a process, not a state.

According to Stewart, the culture of Appalachia fluidly evolves through stories. Stewart describes a time when she was living in Appalachia, when she almost hit another driver head-on. She describes how what happened evolves through stories of what happened and how the stories fluctuate according to who tells them and to whom they are told. "Events become not fixed 'objects' in the world 'out there' but fabulations always already written through with the identity of a reproduction" (78). Stories create the culture, and since they are continually being retold (thus reinterpreted and rewritten), culture is fluid.

Developing this idea further, Stewart explains the problem with a hybrid, fluid culture: "The point is not that culture is a 'complex' 'thing' but rather that it cannot be gotten 'right,' . . . It is not an end, or a blueprint for thinking and acting, but a constant beginning again—a search, an argument, an unfinished longing" (6). Whatever you know or think about culture is always partial; there is always more.

When we recognize that culture is hybrid and fluid, and that therefore our perception of culture is always partial, we can take into account the individuality, complexity, and unpredictability of individuals and social interactions. If the traditional aim of understanding cultures is to be able to make generalizations then the traditional study of cultures is contradictory, because another aim of understanding cultures has also been to

"get along" with other cultures. Generalizing potentially dehumanizes and leads to stereotypes, making it difficult to get along on an individual basis. Cultural studies, with its consideration of hybridity and fluidity, puts more emphasis on balancing the specific with the general.

Whether Mormon or non-Mormon, the construction of self within the Salt Lake City religious culture is necessarily fluid and hybrid. Within the religious culture, both non-Mormon and Mormon Salt Lake residents may find themselves as either dominant or 'Other' depending on their social groups. As a Mormon, I often receive the message that Mormons are the 'Other' everywhere outside this region. To the extent that Mormonism affects my lifestyle and plays a part in my everyday life and conversation, I am the 'Other' within Salt Lake City in groups that are dominantly non-Mormon, however omnipresent the Mormon influence in general. Examples range from my gym to my job where most of my coworkers are not Mormon. Nevertheless if one is not Mormon, one is generally the religious minority, and one's own supposedly normal religious culture could suddenly be different, even subversive. Again to the extent that Mormonism affects one's lifestyle and plays a part in everyday life and conversation, the feelings of otherness for a non-Mormon may extend beyond his or her choice of where to go to church.

Because of their potentially paradoxical experience, it is this latter group's experience that I hoped would further the understanding of how marginality and prejudices are formed and proliferated—in spite of societal rhetorical pressures to avoid them. In comparing this group's experiences outside of Utah with their experiences within Salt Lake City, my original goal was to better understand how fear of difference forms in the

minds of people who want to accept diversity and who cannot understand why others, Mormon or non-Mormon, would be prejudiced or unaccepting. My assumption was that a clear distinction between the 'Other' and the dominant within each individual could be articulated and would shed light on the relationship between how the two are formed. However, this articulation did not happen as expected. Rather I learned more about my cultural situatedness and how my experience as ethnographer had formed the basis of this study, a significant result of ethnographic work nevertheless.

METHODOLOGY

Infancy of this Study: Assumptions and Ideas

Originally my assumption was that this study would reveal some common themes helping me recognize some specific causes of marginality and prejudice in Salt Lake City, some of which could be generalized to other populations. As in the rest of the United States, the dominant cultural rhetoric in Salt Lake City dictates openness and acceptance of differences, yet it seemed to me at the onset of this study that there is a large population in Salt Lake City that feels marginalized. The purpose of this study was to articulate some specific ways that marginality and prejudice are formed, contributing to the expanding body of literature on marginality.

In the forward to the 1994 anthology Our Voices: Essays in Culture, Ethnicity, and Communication, Molefi K. Asante explains that "the field of communication has demonstrated a tendency to represent the hegemonic position of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants . . .". He adds that the anthology is a "projection into the future" because its contributors represent pluralistic, non-hegemonic ideas. Finally, he suggests that "the fact that we now have this volume of essays from scholars trained in the field means that we are well on our way toward a new chorus of human voices in communication" (vii). This study is an attempt to add a new voice to the voices that have been silent for so long and are now speaking out. Revealing some of the concrete ways that marginality and prejudice are formed will give us tools to combat them practically and directly.

Based on these assumptions, I hoped to identify ways that non-Mormons in Salt Lake City define themselves in relation to the dominant religious culture; factors that make them feel like the 'Other'; types of subcultures unique or common to this group; ways that members of this group cope with their minority religious status; attitudes towards otherness in Salt Lake City; and ways that otherness may affect their lives.

Though my general approach remained intact throughout my study, my more specific goals, the items specified above, prevented me from being open to what participants had to say. I had to put aside my assumptions by asking more open-ended questions than I had originally formed. Originally I had planned to start with these questions in my interviews:

1. Describe what you had heard about Salt Lake City before moving here.
2. Describe what you had heard about Mormons before moving here.
3. Describe your feelings about moving to Salt Lake City.
4. Were you afraid you might not fit in here?
5. How well do you feel you fit in here?
6. In what situations or with what groups of people do you feel the most out of place or discriminated against?
7. How well did you "fit in" in the place you lived before moving to Salt Lake?
8. What are some specific things that make you feel like you don't fit in here in Salt Lake?
9. Why do those things make you feel like you don't fit in?
10. How do you deal with those feelings of not fitting in? How do you feel about not fitting in? How much do you feel it affects your quality of life?
11. Are your closest friends here Mormon or non-Mormon? Would it be possible to form close friendships with Mormons?
12. How are your relationships with non-Mormon friends different from your relationships with your Mormon friends?
13. What kinds of things do you have in common with other Mormons?
14. What are the things that distinguish you from Mormons?
15. How do you relate to other non-Mormons here in Salt Lake? Is it different than the way you related to your non-Mormon friends in the place you lived previously?
16. How would you describe yourselves to another Salt Lake City resident,

whom you knew was not Mormon? What if you knew they were Mormon?

17. If they have changed, how have your attitudes towards being the minority changed since you moved to Salt Lake?

But these questions grew out of what I *thought* it was like for non-Mormons in Salt Lake City, in general, my assumption that there is a large population in Salt Lake City that feels marginalized. My assumption was based on personal experiences that revolved around a few people and subgroups. These questions did not necessarily allow participants to generate their own thoughts and feelings. Instead my original questions were based on my assumptions and on my experiences. For example, the questions that revolved around fitting in may have carried no relevancy for some respondents for whom fitting in may have never been an issue; some respondents may have never even thought of it. In fact, bringing up Mormonism in my question presupposed that the Mormon culture was an issue for my respondents. In reality, it was minor for most of my respondents.

Embarking on the Study

Respondents probably would not have understood my original questions the same way I did leading to inappropriate responses and/or confusion. Asking the specific questions would not have generated the open-ended responses that led to the more accurate representations of peoples' feelings and experiences. In this study, my goal was to better understand my and others' experiences by finding out more about them. First I needed to find out how my experiences and those of my acquaintances compared to others' experiences, to find out how common those experiences were. I switched to a

simpler set of more open-ended questions that did not presuppose specific experiences, except the experience of moving to Salt Lake from outside of Utah, and that did not mention Mormon culture at all:

1. How long have you lived in Salt Lake?
2. Where did you move from?
3. When you knew you'd be moving to Salt Lake, what were your expectations?
4. Describe your feelings about moving to Salt Lake.
5. What was it like for you when you first moved to Salt Lake?
6. How has Salt Lake been different from where you used to live?
7. Now that you've lived here for a little while, how do you see Salt Lake?

To give my study focus, I interviewed only couples. Interviewing couples gave me the opportunity to get two perspectives at once during one interview. Interviewing two people at once generated more thoughts and insights as the two individuals in each couple interacted not only with me but with each other, bouncing ideas off each other, responding to each other, and even explaining one another.

Advertisements to recruit respondents were placed in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. *The Salt Lake Tribune* was chosen because of its circulation (35-43% of the Salt Lake market according to a 1998 survey) and diverse readership (includes balanced percentages of both genders, all age groups, marital statuses, education levels, occupation categories, and incomes). This publication was also found to be appropriate for the purposes of this study because its main competition is the Mormon-owned *Deseret News*. Advertisements for participants also ran in Salt Lake City's alternative newspaper, *The City Weekly*, and in the *University of Utah Chronicle*. These advertisements read as follows:

> Looking for couples to participate in a Master's thesis study: I am doing research on the experiences of non-Mormon couples who have moved to Utah

within the last five years. I would like to interview you if you fit this qualification. Please call 322-4211 or 442-4994.

Advertisements were also placed on the University of Utah's married housing bulletin board. When after two weeks only six couples had responded to my ad, I recruited two more couples who were friends of my friends and colleagues, making a total of eight couples. However two of the couples who responded to my ad dropped out, and the other couple never responded to my follow-up phone calls and my Informed Consent letter (see Appendix). I also asked another couple who were friends of some of my friends if they could participate, but we never found a time to meet. I did not again contact the participants who either did not respond or who canceled. One man did call who said he was not in couple relationship but he wanted to express some of his feelings about living here, but otherwise only couples volunteered, and only couples were included in the interviews. I kept a journal of calls I received and recorded how people had responded in their phone calls. In the end, I interviewed six couples.

Like the more simple, open-ended questions, advertising in several places was an attempt to get an open sampling of participants. The varied placement of advertisements was an attempt to reveal what kind of interest my study would generate in Salt Lake City, helping me understand how big an issue Mormonism is in general, rather than how big an issue it is to me or my acquaintances.

When people responded to my ad or to my direct phone calls, I explained that for my master's thesis, I was doing research on the experiences of present-day, non-Mormon immigrants to Salt Lake City. I asked them to participate in a one- to two-hour interview

on the University of Utah campus, at their home, or at my home. If they agreed to participate, they were informed they could withdraw at any time and their information would be kept confidential but that withdrawal of one member of the couple constituted withdrawal of both members of the couple. They were also told they would have editing rights over anything produced from the study that involved their participation.

After talking to them on the phone, I mailed each of the couples the interview questions and two Informed Consent forms—one for them to sign and return to me and one for them to keep (see copy in the Appendix). Interviews were set up with each of the six couples after they had all received the Informed Consent forms and interview questions. The participants were also asked to bring their signed copies of the Informed Consent form. The form had to be signed by both participants. If after reading the Informed Consent form, participants had wanted to withdraw from the interview or the study, I would have thanked them for their time and canceled the interview.

The interviews were conducted either at the participants' homes (in the cases where they were friends of friends) or in rooms reserved at the University of Utah. I recorded the interviews using a microphone and tape recorder rented from the University of Utah Communication Department. The interviews maintained an informal tone since the questions were open-ended and since we did not restrict ourselves to only the predefined questions. In one case, the couple brought their children with them. With the microphone and tape, I could concentrate on the participants' responses, asking additional questions as they came up rather than concentrating on writing everything down. All the predefined questions were discussed in the same order they are listed on the questionnaire, but other

issues and questions were also discussed as they came up. For example, participants sometimes asked me questions about what I thought, about my personal history, or about the responses I had received from other participants. In some interviews, the questions led to other questions, such as "Would you like to raise your kids here in Salt Lake?"

All tapes from these interviews were transcribed by an individual with no tie to this research. With this work complete, I began to read through the transcripts looking for themes that emerged from the participants' discussions. A strong theme emerged where participants explained why or how Salt Lake or Utah was "OK" even though it was different in many ways from their previous homes, or they explained how the Salt Lake area was no different from where they had lived previously. This led to my interest in what makes difference acceptable to people.

It was important, then, to alter the direction of the study which began as a focus on causes of prejudice and marginality and focus more specifically on factors that induce people to accept difference, that is, factors that make some differences acceptable. In general, understanding how hegemony is formed and understanding that there are various ways of knowing has led scholars such as Stuart Hall, Anna Lowenhaupt-Tsing, and Kathleen Stewart to question their ways of knowing, to question their culturally-prescribed values and ideas. These scholars and others have contributed to greater awareness in society and among individuals of cultural issues that affect marginality and prejudice. More specifically my hope is that a further understanding of what makes difference acceptable will lead to greater awareness of how marginality and prejudice are formed.

Finding Oneself in Ethnography

Consistent with a cultural studies approach, I incorporated aspects of ethnography in my study. Learning about oneself, finding the geography of one's own identity and being able to represent one's encounters with other cultures in such a way that it is clear that the ethnography is an individual's experience with culture and not wholly a representation of another culture may be the most important goal of ethnographies. The most valuable potential of ethnographies may be the opportunity to study oneself.

I began this study with the attitude that people who are not Mormon feel oppressed here in Salt Lake City and that I represent the oppressor. However the interviews revealed that the people I talked to did not necessarily feel oppressed—or if they did, it was not their strongest emotion, or they did not feel oppressed when I was listening to them. I expected to hear more stories of feeling ostracized and uncomfortable, but the stories I heard were mostly positive. Again this may have been because I did represent the oppressor, making them feel safer saying what I would want to hear. It may have also been because I was listening, because they had a voice, an opportunity to express themselves and because I was interested in what they had to say, or most of them may simply feel like they have had a positive experience here in Salt Lake. However, the difference between what I expected and what I experienced emphasized my positionality, my unique situatedness. From my vantage point, people who are not Mormon automatically judge Mormons because they feel oppressed, because they feel like they are not part of the 'acceptable group', but most of the people I talked to did not express

feeling like they were not part of a group that they wanted to be part of, implicit or explicit. This realization that I am culturally situated in a position where I am prone to notice only the negative experiences of non-Mormons, but that my culturally-situated experience and viewpoint represents only a part of the Salt Lake City population helped me more easily distinguish how I had constructed what is acceptable in Salt Lake City.

In In the Realm of the Diamond Queen, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing records her experience with the birth and death of an infant in a Meratus household. She was shocked and completely disoriented at the apparent disinterest of the mother, Induan Amar and other female family members because she assumed they would want to take care of the baby and help him to live even though the father was away and did not seem interested in the baby. Because she saw the contrast among the Meratus where men have primary responsibility for reproduction, she realized that in America, the dominant ideology places primary responsibility on the mother. Living among the Meratus, doing ethnographic work, Tsing had the opportunity to realize the ideology that had formed her opinions and behavior which made her question that ideology (115-121).

In her ethnography of Appalachia, Kathleen Stewart tells of an experience where she realized how well she related with her Appalachian neighbors and friends. After relating the story of her near, head-on collision with another driver, she says, "I immediately wanted to go and tell my neighbors. Like the old man with the copperhead bite, I wanted to see the looks on their faces" (78). Just like the people she associates with in Appalachia (like the old man with the copperhead bite), she then drives away to tell the story to everyone she can. She also remembers "the strange, doubled sensation of being

both subject and object of the story," a sensation usually attributed to her Appalachian friends and neighbors. Tsing refers to Renato Rosaldo: "between groups—where anthropologists once saw only cultural gaps—he suggests that there may be connections and overlapping agendas" (21). In a self-conscious way, Stewart's experience exemplifies Rosaldo's suggestion. She exemplifies that her geography of identity overlaps with "Appalachian geography."

My experiences not only formed the basis of my study and helped me construct ideas about what is acceptable in Salt Lake City, but they also overlapped with the experiences of people I interviewed. For example, I interviewed a couple who are Jehovah's Witnesses. They too go door-to-door hoping to share messages from the scriptures and messages about Jesus Christ. They described their door-to-door missionary experience similarly to how I have described my mission to people, a description that attempts to normalize the experience so that it fits into what is acceptable, a description that attempts to discount the common stereotypes.

Though he does not write ethnographies per se, Stuart Hall has contributed so significantly to cultural studies partly because he has embarked on a search to find himself, to learn how to occupy a certain space (Chen 489), to understand his diasporic nature (490, 501), and has done so through cultural studies. Traveling to England from his native Jamaica, he found he was "very much formed" by his experience among West Indian expatriates studying in the country that had colonized theirs (492). His experience in England is an ethnography, actually a multiethnography, in the sense that he lived in the midst of cultures not his own, studying and writing about cultural issues relevant to

those cultures. He learned in feminist studies for example that "living the politics is different from being abstractly in favor of it," and thus realized that though he was abstractly in favor of feminism, it was harder to accept that according to feminist ideals, he himself was "the enemy" as the senior patriarchal figure (500). (His "ethnographic" experience is different from Tsing's and Stewart's in that he has studied among the colonizer, rather than among the colonized, though the object of his studies is still the colonized.)

Finding oneself in ethnographic work affords one the opportunity to discover and understand that the self "is not a unified but contradictory subject and social construction" (Hall "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity" 440). It helps one understand how identity and self-acceptance and acceptance of others all interact. Tsing's ethnographic study examines her marginality and dominance from the perspective of another margin. She found that her culture is both marginal and dominant: though she experiences marginality in the United States as a woman of Chinese and Jewish heritage, she actually represents the dominant in Meratus culture. To Meratus shaman, Uma Adang, Tsing is like the Diamond Queen, a mysterious powerful savior (6, 21). But she is also servant to Uma Adang as one who helps Uma Adang in her role as shaman by tape recording her speeches for example (12); she is a subject in Uma Adang's history—in an ethnographer's role reversal (10); she is protected by Uma Adang (21); and she is a close friend to Uma Adang in an equitable, respectful relationship (18, 21). Tsing's relationship with Uma Adang exemplifies the "'borderlands'—the critical spaces created as contrasting discourses of dominance touch and compete in a contested hierarchy" (225).

Similarly it is at the borderlines of my interactions with others in Salt Lake City that I find "contrasting discourses of dominance touch and compete": feeling like the oppressor and the oppressed, questioning my motives at times because they seem to be perceived as unacceptable or questioning my motives at other times because they seem to be perceived as acceptable. I struggle against losing my identity simply to be part of the 'acceptable group'. The ethnographic experience does not consist of the ethnographer "collecting information specimens to take home," but rather of the new aspects of both other and self found when the two interact at the borderlines. "Ethnographic insight emerges, not from culture-to-culture confrontation nor woman-to-woman communication, but, instead, from the stories told by one situated commentator to another" (225).

In order to further the understanding of global cultural economy and the disjunctures that influence it, Arjun Appadurai introduces a framework that defines global cultural flow with five *scapes*: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes (328). He uses the suffix *-scape* because it points to the "fluid and irregular shapes of these landscapes," because it indicates,

> that these are not objectively given relations which look the same from every angle of vision, but rather that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements . . . and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods and families. (329)

Tsing's experiences illustrate that the suffix *-scape* could also be applied to self: a selfscape.

Finding oneself in ethnographic work helps one see how certain ideas have been articulated to form connections in one's culture that are not necessary connections. Jennifer Daryl Slack quotes Stuart Hall: "the so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'" (115). Tsing realized that in U.S. American culture of which she is part, the unity between women and reproduction (and between the women/reproduction connection and reality) could be rearticulated so that a unity exists instead between men and reproduction (and between the men/reproduction connection and reality). "U.S. American culture makes reproduction a female domain to which men are peripheral. . . . In contrast, Induan Amar's baby was conceived, first and foremost, as the product of her husband's responsibility and desire. His semen formed a fetus in her womb; his hand should have welcomed the newborn" (118).

Ethnographic work also helps us see in what ways we have identified or united ourselves with certain groups. Tsing illustrates that though she is a woman, she did not necessarily find it easier to talk to other women than to talk to men in Indonesia (219). She also identifies herself with marginal groups in the United States, yet she found that her marginality was much different than the Meratus'. Thus we are not necessarily essentially part of certain groups, but we create connections with certain groups. Stuart Hall says that "even the 'hegemonic' moment is no longer conceptualized as a moment of *simple* unity, but as a process of unification (never totally achieved), founded on strategic alliances between different sectors, not on their pre-given identity" (437). In my interviews, but also in day-to-day interactions, I have found that though I associate myself

with Mormon groups, I often find it easier to relate with people who are not Mormon or people who are not practicing Mormon. I am constantly redefining my relationships (my connections) with Mormon and non-Mormon acquaintances, and the change in these fluid connections depends on new experiences on my part and the part of others', and in addition, my recognition of their experiences and their recognition of mine.

Finding oneself in ethnographic work is also important since ideologies are locationally and historically-specific; though we can identify destructive ideologies in others, we do not see them in ourselves. Stuart Hall says of racism, "no doubt there are certain general features to racism. But even more significant are the ways in which these general features are modified and transformed by the historical specificity of the contexts and environments in which they become active" (435). Ethnographic work helps us recognize our situated ideologies in other situations, potentially revealing the discrepancies (see Clifford, "Traveling Cultures"). Tsing found that the ideology of the primitive nomad from her Eurocentric background made no sense in the 20th century Meratus life world and instead was replaced with an ideology of travel. She says, "travel practices and travel-related forms of knowledge are essential to understanding the cultural and political shape of Meratus marginality" (124). My family situation growing up included the attitude that because it is prohibited by the Mormon religion, coffee is unacceptable, and to extend the idea, people who drink coffee are somehow not quite right, not quite part of the 'acceptable group'. Learning more about the environment I grew up in taught me how narrowly-situated this idea was.

Ethnography then is not just a way of seeing ourselves, but of seeing ourselves in relation to others. Ethnography forces a repositioning of self, a redefining of self. The ethnographer is faced with difference, but at the same time the ethnographer is the minority, ironically finding similarities with people who may have previously been defined by their differences (hence the motivation for ethnography). Some similarities the ethnographer may not have been aware existed in him or herself. Other similarities develop after the ethnographer sees a whole new way to respond to the world—ethnography becomes a subjecting of oneself to the influence of others.

In fact ethnography should be seen as a way of seeing another culture in relation to one's own. For example as a woman, Tsing's experience among the Meratus and other Indonesians was different than it would have been had she been a man. It was difficult for her to seek "knowledge in a context where knowledge is a male conquest" (216). She could not interact with regional authorities the way a man could have, and thus had a different perspective, a different experience than a man would have. She would not have had the status of the Diamond Queen had she been a man, nor would she have had the same kind of relationship with Uma Adang (278). Because of her Western background, she brought different ideologies to the Meratus way of thinking, and that difference sometimes conflicted and created situations that otherwise would not have happened. She influenced the telling of the birth and death of a child: "Induan Amar's male relatives recalled the story of her first birth as a late miscarriage, frustrated for just a moment by the actions of a naive anthropologist" (118).

Because ethnographies are a way to find ourselves, they help ethnographers and ethnography readers to realize "the importance of self-consciousness about the practices in which knowledge is produced" (Tsing 124). In discussing the similarity between views of the alien colonizer by the colonized and views of the colonized 'Other' by the colonizer, Tsing claims that "it can only benefit anthropology . . . to bring a more self-conscious appreciation to this kind of ethnographic interaction" (229). The same could be said for any kind of ethnographic interaction. It potentially changes what is important to the ethnographer and the ethnographic reader, making them cling more to what becomes important and let go of, or loosen a grip on, what becomes unimportant. For these reasons, ethnographies become very important, not only the doing of them, but also the "accurate" representing of them. Not only is finding out about oneself through ethnographic work important, but finding the opportunities to do ethnographic work at the local level is also important. One can also find her or himself in ethnographic study in the sense that she or he realizes the omnipresent opportunities to do ethnographic work in her or his own community, however that community is defined; that is, the possibility is always there to engage in the paradoxical self-reflexive study of the 'Other'.

Thus my thesis is a self-reflexive study of the 'Other' here in my own community. Non-Mormons are 'Other' not only because this community is so heavily influenced by Mormons but also because I as the ethnographer am Mormon. However, rather than excluding readers, a self-reflexive study affords readers the opportunity to relate and involve themselves within the study. According to George Herbert Mead, we as humans have the ability to see ourselves as objects to be acted upon. "We can name our-

selves . . ." (quoted in Hewitt 10). A self-reflexive study gives others the opportunity to reflect on themselves.

Symbolic Interactionism: Integrating Self and Society

A symbolic interactionist approach is appropriate for interpreting the results of this study because it emphasizes the integration of self and society and the methods people use to cope with new surroundings. It analyzes the constructed nature of social meaning and reality, viewing "living things as attempting to make practical adjustments to their surroundings" (Hewitt 7). This study focuses on the integration of non-Mormon selves within a society heavily-influenced by Mormonism and attempts to identify how members of the non-Mormon group construct what is acceptable as they cope with differences in a new society. Because of its assumption that human conduct is self-reflexive, symbolic interactionism is a natural approach to the study of 'Other' as the study of self. It also suggests that readers will find value in a self-reflexive study because they will have opportunity to reflect on themselves.

RESULTS

Accepting Difference from Different Perspectives

A thorough analysis of the transcripts led me to a necessary distinction in order to contextualize the question, *What makes difference acceptable?* The distinction is between two underlying attitudes or perspectives that affect how one responds. One class of responses resulted from accepting difference from the majority perspective, from the perspective of whether or not the subject approves of the difference. Second were responses resulting from accepting difference from the minority perspective, from the perspective of how a particular difference affects self. I have called the first the Judgmental perspective and the second the Reactive perspective. Though impossible for me to tell which attitude or perspective was most prevalent in each individual in his or her responses, I perceived at least that the distinction exists. This distinction is important because the perspective one has makes a profound difference in how one accepts difference.

Judgmental Perspective

The first class of responses seemed to be generated from a perspective which presupposes a claim to judgment, an inherent "right" to judge whether a particular difference is acceptable. The right to judge what is acceptable for the group belongs to the 'acceptable group'. This is based on the assumption that in whatever subgroup one exists at a certain time and place, if she is part of the 'acceptable group', she can safely express

her opinions and attitudes and they will be acceptable. In other words, her opinions and attitudes will reflect or even decide what is acceptable to the subgroup in which she exists. As Fiske elaborates, ". . . knowing how to produce 'truth' [is a technique] of power" (258). Though it would be too simplified to assume that anyone has the luxury of always feeling safe expressing her attitudes and opinions, there are situations where people feel comfortable making a judgment without the fear of not being accepted for that judgment.

For example, a respondent in my study who may not have known that I am Mormon, could have assumed that my study was an opportunity for non-Mormons to express their negative feelings, and may have felt free to complain openly that Mormons are "too close-minded" with the expectation that I would agree. In this situation, the respondent would have the Judgmental perspective, assuming that he or she can safely decide or identify what is acceptable among non-Mormons living in a Mormon-dominated community. Conversly, assuming a Judgmental perspective and knowing I am Mormon, respondents could have seen my interviews as a way for me to find justification for my religion because its practices do not seem acceptable in the cultures with which they are familiar. As a representative of what is acceptable, the respondent can confidently make judgments on the acceptability of my religious practices. A respondent might say "It's OK if people here don't drink; I don't have a problem with that" as if to assure me that my religious practice can be acceptable. A respondent might also respond to one of my religiously-influenced opinions: "Don't you think that's kind of close-minded?" as if to

convert me to a more acceptable way of thinking. Either way, the respondent assumes the right to judge what is acceptable.

Reactive Perspective

The Reactive perspective exists for people who within a certain subgroup do not feel they are part of the 'acceptable group'. Rather than feeling an inherent right to judge what is acceptable, people who have this perspective must mediate what is acceptable to them with what is acceptable in the subgroup. They may feel forced to find particular differences acceptable, or at least to give the impression that they find the particular differences acceptable. From this perspective, differences are more likely to affect how one feels about oneself or more likely to affect one's opportunities. Accepting difference from the Reactive perspective must also be mediated with how the differences affects oneself and one's opportunities. Whereas from the Judgmental perspective, self-esteem and opportunity are not threatened—as long as one's *acceptable* status remains intact. In fact, the decision of whether or not to accept a difference is likely motivated by a desire to maintain one's *acceptable* status, or from the Reactive perspective, a desire to find acceptance.

In my study, respondents who knew I am Mormon may have viewed their respective statuses from a Reactive perspective, viewing me as part of the 'acceptable group', viewing themselves in a position of struggle, vulnerability, inadequacy, ignorance, or even instability. They may have been trying not only to be what is *acceptable*, but also to understand what constitutes *acceptability*. From this perspective, respondents may have

expressed frustration, but then qualified their statements after gauging my response. Alternately, they may have given general or vague responses, that is, until they could say something with confidence either because they had learned a cultural norm with which they could be confident or because they had gauged my attitude enough to feel comfortable with certain responses.

One respondent, Sophia, seemed to have a Reactive perspective when she told me a story about her boss. He could not go to his son's wedding because it was in the Mormon temple. As an inactive member of the Mormon church, he was not allowed in the temple. Sophia commented "That was kind of sad." But to qualify her comment she added, " But I guess that's just the way things are done around here. It's not really that big of a deal. I mean no one was there when we got married either—well—we just kind of eloped." She went on to comment on the positive side of Mormon temple weddings that inactive or non-Members cannot attend: ". . . all the other weddings you like suffer through the wedding and then you get the cake, but this way we just go right to the cake; it's pretty cool." (Mormon temple weddings are usually accompanied by receptions or open houses where access is not restricted by religious preference.) Perhaps in an effort to find acceptance from me, Sophia may have felt a need to temper her initial comment on the Mormon temple wedding by emphasizing the positive or falling back on the Mormon cultural norm with which she was familiar, a Mormon wedding reception.

The decision to accept difference from the Reactive perspective is motivated from a different source than the need or desire to *determine* what is acceptable from the Judgmental perspective. Motivation to accept difference from the Reactive perspective

seems to depend on how the specific difference affects one's own acceptability. A difference that excludes or limits opportunity is not likely to be accepted. One who feels excluded from the 'acceptable group' because of a specific difference is not likely to accept the difference, and in an environment or subgroup where he feels accepted, he is likely to feel comfortable expressing nonacceptance of the difference that excludes him. In this specific subgroup, anyone or any idea representative of the offending difference ironically becomes excluded from the 'acceptable group'.

Reactive and Judgmental Perspectives: a Summary

The Reactive and Judgmental perspectives are hegemonic. From the Reactive perspective, one contributes to the hegemonic ideas by choosing to seek acceptance from the dominant or 'acceptable group', thereby choosing to support the maintenance of the 'acceptable group'. From the Judgmental perspective, one contributes to the hegemonic ideas by assuming the role of determining what is acceptable, the implication being that there is a line between what is acceptable and what is not. Consistent with Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, "the bourgeoisie can become a hegemonic, leading class only to the degree that bourgeois ideology is able to accommodate, to find some space for, opposing class cultures and values," the Judgmental perspective would not exist without the distinction between what is acceptable and what is not. (Bennett quoted in Chaney 47).

Stuart Hall says "living in politics is different from being abstractly in favor of it," a distinction that also echoes the distinction between the Reactive and Judgmental

perspectives (Chen 500). Living in a culture and seeking acceptance (from the Reactive perspective) differ from seeking acceptance from or learning to accept a marginalized culture (from the Judgmental perspective). The distinction between the Reactive and Judgmental perspectives is significant in understanding how differences are accepted since the motivation to accept difference is very different from each perspective. Professing a creed of acceptance of difference could be considered a favor from the perspective of the 'acceptable group'. Whereas, like living in politics rather than being abstractly in favor of them, accepting difference can seem like a necessity for those who are not part of the 'acceptable group'.

Consistent with culture itself, the Judgmental and Reactive perspectives are fluid, components of each existing in all cultural interactions and in all individuals' perspectives. In the interviews, respondents displayed combinations of Judgmental and Reactive perspectives.

What Makes Difference Acceptable

In the process of creating categories with which to organize the responses, I had created a category within the Reactive perspective called "Difference does not affect how I feel about myself or my opportunities," but I realized that all responses fit into this category—the distinctions actually came in how those differences were mediated so that they did not have a negative effect, so that they did not negatively affect how people felt about themselves or negatively affect their opportunities. Even though the impact of a difference to one's self-esteem or opportunities seems to be much greater from a Reactive

perspective, whether the difference affects one's self-esteem or opportunities may substantially affect whether subjects accept difference from either a Reactive or a Judgmental perspective. The general themes that arose from the responses are as follows: *a particular difference does not negatively affect me or it positively affects me, because I minimize, eliminate, assimilate/associate with, or overcome/transcend the difference.*

Minimizing is the most common form of acceptance found in the responses in this study. Minimizing means either that the difference has little negative effect or that subjects have found a way to minimize the effect of the difference.

To eliminate the difference means that respondents had found a way to not only minimize the difference, but to basically make it nonexistent in their lives even if they recognized that the difference existed. Many manifested this response when they said they did not even notice the Mormon religion's dominance in Salt Lake City culture.

Closely related to minimizing is a tendency to assimilate or associate with the difference. In short, it is no longer a difference for the respondent. This is not the same as minimizing because the difference does not have to be minimized for someone to associate with it or assimilate it—even though this may be a natural result. However, the natural result may also be that the difference is emphasized. For a non-Mormon who moves to Salt Lake City and converts to Mormonism taking on Mormon lifestyle, the difference has been assimilated and emphasized.

To overcome or transcend the difference usually refers to the difference in relation to self. Again this is not the same as minimizing the difference because the difference may actually be emphasized when it is overcome or transcended. Following is a discussion of

the specific categories that most of the responses fell into. The names of the respondents have been changed to fictional names.

Minimizing the Difference

If it does not seem excessive, either because there is too much difference or because the difference itself is not classified as "excessive behavior," a difference becomes acceptable because it is minimized. Some differences may be a perceived or real threat to others' opportunities or self-esteems when they are excessive, whereas they are not a threat when they are small differences or are differences that would not classify as excessive behavior to the one outside of the difference. Referring to a legislative ban on high school clubs that came about because of some students' desire for a gay club at a high school in Salt Lake City, Lucia, a graduate student at the University of Utah in her late 20s, said,

> . . . it just sort of shocked me that the vehemence and the vitriol that was thrown at these poor kids, they're like 16, 17 years old and these people are coming at them with all their guns firing, it just sort of set me aback. It didn't seem . . . it seemed excessive, really excessive and it seemed unwarranted in my opinion. Stuff like that then I just go, "Oh! I'm in a different place than I'm used to."

Not only was the official reaction to the gay club different from what Lucia was used to, but it was also unacceptable because she perceived it as excessive behavior. Lucia also articulated a phenomenon she had observed: "I think people feel like they have to prove Utah's good or something, a nice place. I mean, who cares?" She went on to explain how this difference was excessive:

> We were in Chicago at the time the Jazz made the National Championships then. Everyone here was just like, "It's our coming of age" and it was a basketball game! Sure, I'm not really into sports but I've lived in cities where, you know Boston, they're really into the sports but they didn't see it as somehow creating or forming Boston's identity; it was just a sporting event, they were just really into their sporting event.

The fact that Utahns seemed to define their state's identity by how their basketball team played was a difference to Lucia, but specifically, Lucia found its excessiveness unacceptable.

A friend visiting from another state once asked me if I didn't think it was excessive to have so many Mormon churches in Utah. He had looked under "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" in the phone book and noticed how many pages the applicable entries took up. The religious difference was not such a shock to him as the overwhelming presence of the religion; it was "too much" difference.

When difference does not limit one's opportunities, the difference is minimized and becomes easier to accept. Martina, a student at the University of Utah in her early 20s, had a hard time accepting a difference she observed in Utah because she felt it was limiting others' opportunities. She and her boyfriend, Sean, felt that Salt Lake was more homogenous than some of the places they had previously lived. Lucia felt that also applied to a homogeneity in the professional medical world where she was working: " . . . walking the halls [of the University of Utah hospital], being the future doctors are white men, and once in awhile you see a Pacific Islander medical student." Further she had observed an attitude that limited medical career opportunities for minorities and women:

> We had to go out to the schools to talk about women and medicine and women in science and we've had principals tell us it's not an appropriate course

> of study for women, still today, I mean it's 1998 and they're saying that women shouldn't be in scientific pursuits or in medicine.

The inference from this response is that if Lucia had felt that the medical students represented a fair sampling of minorities and women, if she had observed that the schools encouraged women to pursue scientific and medical studies and careers, the homogeneity in Utah would have been easier for her to accept.

Betsy, a young mother of a toddler, expressed her concern for the social opportunities for her child because he is not Mormon. Her husband, Von who transferred to Utah for work, related the experiences of a man he had met who had grown up in Utah, who was not Mormon. The man had attended Mormon church meetings not only because all his friends were Mormon so he needed to do it to fit in, but also because many of his friends' parents did not allow their children to play with other kids who did not go to church with them. The religious difference in Salt Lake could become more or less acceptable to this couple depending on the social opportunities their children have as they grow older. Another couple also expressed that they did not have a lot of friends and ascribed this partly to the fact that they did not share many of the cultural experiences of their peers, such as having served a Mormon mission.

Erwin and his wife Alice, a couple in their mid 20s, came to Salt Lake City because they had an option to transfer with his job. Alice attends school at the University of Utah. Erwin expressed satisfaction with Utah because opportunities did not seem limited.

> To me, it's more my span of control. If it ever got into because I wasn't LDS and it was going to affect me and my family, if somebody, if a garbage man isn't going to get a pay raise because he's not LDS, yes that concerns me, but no, that's not affecting me, you know what I'm saying? But if it got to the point where I

> wasn't getting a raise because I wasn't LDS or I wasn't getting a promotion, I would have a huge problem with that. But so far my contact with the LDS has been on a pretty even keel, number one; and it's pleasant, it's been very pleasant, number two. As long as that is maintained, as long as there's respect and as long as there is two-way respect and two-way tolerance, and two-way opportunity, I don't have any problems with it at all.

In spite of noticing the prevailing religious culture in Salt Lake, a religious culture different from his own and different from the culture he had moved from, Erwin did not "have any problems" with the difference because he felt his opportunities were open.

Closely related with differences that limit opportunities are differences that create inconveniences. These differences are also hard to accept. Several couples expressed frustration at not being able to go bar hopping and buy alcohol in Salt Lake because of strict liquor laws. Martina, who also felt it was time for her to move from Salt Lake, expressed frustration that they could not do what they wanted to on Sundays, the Mormon Sabbath.

> Then Sundays, the stores all being closed—that was kind of crazy because right now the only day we both have off is Sunday so that's like our day to go eat or go play or whatever . . . And it's like we're always looking for restaurants and it's like, "It's closed!" My sister is always like, "Try this one" and it's like, they're closed on Sunday. That's the only day we have to go out.

If the Sunday difference in Salt Lake had not inconvenienced this respondent, the difference may have been minimized or even eliminated, potentially making it acceptable.

One way respondents minimized difference was to form direct comparisons, relating the difference to things that were familiar, and in some cases, not adapting to the difference but realizing that their own cultures had differences too. In this way, the differences encountered in another culture do not negatively affect one's self-esteem. In relation to how the differences in Utah were perceived by their acquaintances in another

state, Betsy and Von told how people had said things such as "Oh, you're going to live with the Mormons." When I asked what kinds of connotations were associated with this comment, the couple responded that it was kind of derogatory, or at least a joke. I asked again,

> Me: Did people think Mormonism was like a cult there, I mean did they think it was a really weird thing?
>
> Von & Betsy: No
>
> Me: Or just another religion—there was just a lot of us?
>
> Betsy: Yah, cause we're kind of from a religion where we've gotten labeled and called that before so you know, we kind of know . . . I don't think anyone perceived it as cult, just a religion.

Von's and Betsy's experiences related closely to those I referred to in the Mormon culture. Even though their acquaintances perceived Utah and Mormonism as different, that difference was minimized because of the close comparison in experiences.

Lucia's boyfriend, Dean, a man in his early 30s who moved to Salt Lake to be with Lucia, talked about his Jewish culture in relation to the Mormon culture.

> There's just a different sensibility, there's like a cultural thing rather than a religious thing. It's nothing I can put my finger on but those are my people and these are not my people, and it's cultural. I mean it's hard to explain: the way they talk, the kinds of foods they eat, the kinds of movies they like.

Dean may have been implying that the differences in Salt Lake were acceptable to him, not because he shared those differences, but because he recognized that his culture had other differences that did not exist in other cultures. Whether or not Dean was implying this, his recognition of his own cultural differences will potentially lead him to accept others' cultural differences.

However, Dean's comments also implied that even if he were in a foreign culture, if he still had some of the comforts of his own familiar culture, the differences would be minimized.

> Dean: These aren't my people [Utahns]. That's sort of the thing for me. I'm Jewish and my family is in New York, and so that's a negative for me. Basically any place besides New York City would be that way.
>
> Me: Like it's not home?
>
> Dean: Actually, that's not true. I mean if there was a larger Jewish community, that would make a difference . . .

Having a support group of people with whom one shares cultural similarities makes living within a dominant culture that is not one's own more acceptable; the difference is minimized, and one's self-worth and opportunities are not as likely to be affected negatively in spite of the dominant culture. Speaking of her social experiences in moving to Salt Lake, Betsy was glad that she had had the comforts of a religious culture that was familiar to her—she immediately met people from her own religion when she moved to Salt Lake: "It seemed like right away, you know, if you have a religious affiliation at least you have a start, a group to start with. So we didn't notice a problem, where I can see how some without that kind of link, it might make it harder to get to know people."

Brian, a police officer in his 40s, inferred that in the absence of similarities he could feel comfortable among cultures predominantly different from his own if he could joke about the differences. Unfortunately he had made a Mormon joke at work where his coworkers and boss were predominately Mormon, and he was suspended from work for three days without pay. If the situation had turned out positively, Brian would likely have

felt comfortable joking about the differences, allowing him an outlet to help mediate the exclusion he felt and thereby minimize the differences.

Again, in the absence of similarities, difference in a particular culture becomes more acceptable when the differences have been encountered before in another culture. Most responses in this category seemed to generate from a Judgmental perspective where respondents indicated that a particular difference was OK because they'd seen it before. Before moving here, Lucia had heard that there was no diversity in Salt Lake, but she said, "I was living in Amherst, Massachusetts where there is about zero diversity too so I didn't really . . . it wasn't something I gave a lot of thought to." Later in the conversation as Lucia and Dean were giving examples of differences in Salt Lake, Lucia commented, " . . . I went and visited the South, and it was just like a week but just that taste of yet another very different culture, I was like, 'Well I think America is just made up of some pretty disparate cultures.'"

Erwin and Alice discussed the drinking laws in Utah with me, commenting that the drinking laws in Utah were odd. But of where they had previously attended college, Erwin said,

> They've got some screwy things too . . . the whole county is dry . . . you have to go outside the city limits so we're kind of used to screwy liquor laws . . . . But Texas has its share of screwy things as far as alcohol is concerned. It's just kind of getting adjusted to a new experience. A different kind of screwy.

Alice and Erwin thought the drinking laws in Utah were very strange, but the strangeness was minimized because they had already seen strange laws in other places.

Though not completely acceptable, one difference was minimized for Sophia for the same reason:

> You'll see people talking about other people downtown or at the mall and it's just like, 'Just cause that kid has a nose ring doesn't mean he's evil.' That kind of stuff occasionally kind of grates on you. It's like that anywhere. It was like that in Arkansas.

Sophia and her husband, Ian, continued, bringing up that towns and churches they had been to also had people like that and that their grandmas were like that. Sophia and Ian, a couple in their late 20s, moved to Salt Lake City so he could attend graduate school at the University of Utah. He has graduated, and they are both working in Salt Lake.

On the other hand, some differences are not only acceptable, but become normal when they have been seen in other cultures. Von and Betsy commented on the ubiquitous news coverage of the Sesquicentennial of the Mormon pioneers entering Salt Lake valley. Even though the heavy news coverage of other Mormon-related events bothered them, Von said of the Sesquicentennial coverage, "That didn't bother me. That's something that any state will celebrate."

Brian found that since what he had in common with other non-Mormons was so prevalent the differences in their religions were minimal.

> Brian: We [he and non-Mormon friends] kind of developed a clique because we are so excluded it's frustrating.
>
> Me: So in other words the reason you developed the clique was solely on the basis that you guys aren't Mormon? Otherwise if you lived someplace else you might not have gotten together?
>
> Brian: Right, absolutely. There is no doubt about that. Otherwise we would have never come up with the idea of this idea of a religious conglomeration. We have Lutherans, Protestants, Baptists, Catholics, and we all kind of come together.

Brian had found that the religious differences among his friends were minimized when they united as the minority in reaction to a greater difference. Through that unity, the greater difference may have also been minimized, ironically in spite of its influence. If he had found acceptance in spite of his differences, Brian appeared very willing to accept the differences in his Mormon acquaintances since he found many other things in common with them. Differences can be minimized and accepted either through a commonality that seems big enough to dominate the differences or through enough commonalties to overpower the differences. Further, knowing people who represent a dominant difference such as Mormon people, but who are acceptable people nevertheless, makes the difference more acceptable:

> Me: At one point you were talking and you said, 'they' meaning LDS and you said, 'I hate to refer to it that way.
>
> Brian: Well I know good . . . how do I say this . . . we both know good people.
>
> Esther: Who happen to be LDS or non-LDS.

Brian and his girlfriend, Esther, inferred that they hated referring to LDS people as "they" since they knew all LDS people did not fit into one class; they were not all good or all bad, so their differences were not so easily discounted as unacceptable. Esther, a mother in her late 30s, is in Salt Lake attending medical school.

Several couples knew what to expect in moving to Utah, so they specifically mentioned that the move was not such a big deal even though it was a big change. Again the differences were minimized, so they did not negatively affect these couples. Erwin and Alice had researched Salt Lake in an effort to make a decision about a job transfer. Erwin, who had enjoyed his experience in Salt Lake said, "For me it wasn't that big of

deal, it was . . I kind of had more realistic expectations." Dean, who brought up no issues with the Mormon influence and expressed his satisfaction with living in Utah, told me he had expected "a very homogeneous society, very white, very Mormon."

Another couple knew little about Utah, and very little about the Mormon influence before moving to Salt Lake:

> Betsy: Actually, I didn't even know before we had made the decision to move out here, I didn't even know it was a religiously-saturated, you know.
>
> Von: Not that heavily, you knew their presence was out here but not that much.

Later in the interview, Von expressed the surprise he had experienced when he realized how heavy the Mormon influence was:

> Um, I guess the longer we've lived here, the more we've noticed the Mormon influence whether it be in politics, local, or state government, so that, we're still not used to that because back East the church and state were completely separate and if they even tried to intermix them, people got in trouble for it. You know, it's still difficult for me to grasp the concept of seminaries at schools. I don't see how the state can get away with that.

The Mormon political influence was difficult for this respondent to accept partly because he had not expected or previously encountered the effects of the difference.

Even if one is not familiar with a difference, if that difference fits into a category that one is on the whole familiar with, the difference can be acceptable. For example, two respondents specifically said they thought Mormonism was a Christian religion, just not something they believed in. The fact that these two made the point that Mormonism is a Christian religion seemed to indicate that they felt the Mormon lifestyle, though not a lifestyle they found acceptable for themselves, was at least an acceptable lifestyle for

others since it was Christian. Minimizing the religious and lifestyle difference through emphasizing its familiar component made the difference more acceptable.

Expanding on the idea that difference becomes acceptable when it fits into a familiar category is the idea that difference becomes acceptable when it is understandable, logical. A difference may become acceptable when it "makes sense." Many experiences or observations that these respondents had may have been negative regardless of whether or not the respondents understood them. However, the respondents often expressed lack of understanding as their main complaint. Martina did not understand this aspect of the Mormon community, making the attitudes that were different from hers more difficult for her to accept:

> Yah, when Budweiser put up like, or Coors put up like seven million dollars to put up the E Center and people turned them down. It's like, "You don't have the money. They're offering you seven million dollars, and all you have to do is put their name on the building, and you're turning them down?" Stuff like that blows my mind.

Understanding the mentality behind the decision to not accept Coors' money may have made Martina more accepting of the idea. Lucia liked living in Salt Lake for the most part, but when I asked her what was different about Salt Lake from where she used to live, she complained, "The thing that has bugged me the most is the perception of women having certain set roles and you're not supposed to break out of those roles at all, and I don't understand that." A better understanding of the perception of women's roles in Salt Lake may have altered Lucia's perception of women's generally expected roles in Salt Lake, making the atmosphere in Salt Lake more acceptable to her. Or a better

understanding, though not altering her perception, may have made the expectations she had encountered in Salt Lake more acceptable.

To mediate the social difference they encountered in Salt Lake City, Sophia and Ian attempted explanations for the differences. Their social lives in Arkansas had been easy: they made friends instantly and found people to be very friendly. Making friends in Salt Lake proved more difficult. Ian said, "I don't know if it's just because of the fact that it's a bigger city." Sophia added, " . . . you get older too and everyone starts having kids and all that stuff; that's probably part of it." Attempts to explain the differences were attempts to minimize the difference. In his single days, Brian had also met challenges in the social atmosphere of Salt Lake when he tried to date LDS women. Any LDS women he had gone out with would not date him when they found out he was not LDS. When asked, "And so you didn't like that?", he responded that he just didn't understand it.

Differences are acceptable when they are better than the alternative or better than something worse. This was a common theme that tended to minimize the differences. For example, respondents said things like, "the people that are our age that aren't LDS are kind of whacko," "the ones who aren't LDS are hard core into drugs or into rebelling," or "As far as influence goes, I'd rather have an LDS influence over like a city overrun by gangs." Observing that Salt Lake is a "pretty God-fearing community," Erwin expressed that "if a people are going to go to one extreme or another, I'd rather have them go to the extreme towards God than away from God, type thing." One couple who had emphasized the homogeneity of Utah later added this:

Dean: At least you don't have the Klan here. It could be a lot worse.

> Lucia: I'd have to say, that's one thing I do appreciate here. There's a lot of skinheads in Denver and there was a lot of white race violence against other people and I don't see that here. I don't see people beating up on Hispanics and you saw that all the time in Denver. It seems that people come down pretty hard on that and kick them out of here, don't let them stay here, don't accept it. I appreciate that because growing up in Denver it was awful. We're really lucky.

I asked Von and Betsy if going door-to-door to share religious messages was different here than it was in their home state. Betsy responded,

> It is. I think that Mormons, maybe because it's because they have missionaries out there or whatever but they usually will let us share whatever scriptural thought we want with them. Sometimes you get into discussions where back East even though people claim to be religious, in most religions, they're not. They really don't . . . they're not, although they may go to church but they're not, and they didn't want to hear anything. You never got past hello. They would just shut the door.

As Lucia expressed, respondents often felt lucky to live with the differences they encountered in Salt Lake when compared to differences they had encountered in other geographical areas. For one respondent the differences in Salt Lake seemed less obvious or less negative than they were in other places she had lived. Esther complained of being ignored by the salesmen when she went to buy a car—she felt the treatment resulted from her being a woman. However she gave an example of living in an Islamic culture where she said no one would blink an eye if a daughter were drowned in the family swimming pool for misbehaving. She concluded, "So to me anything less than that seems quite acceptable . . .. I don't put up with it if it's affecting what I need done." To her the difference in how women were treated in Salt Lake was very minimal compared to how they were treated in the predominantly Islamic city in which she had lived.

Beyond a difference being better than the alternative, a difference may be accompanied with good things, making it more likely to be acceptable. In this case the

difference is minimized as the good things are emphasized. Sophia said about the Mormon influence in Salt Lake,

> For every bad there's a lot of good that comes from it. Just the responsibility that church has to its own members like if anyone is not doing as well financially either socially find them a job in the community or help them out as far as food donations. I wish more religions would be like the LDS religion.

While discussing things that were different about Salt Lake from her previous home, Lucia gave this example,

> There's some things I've gotten used to that I think are nice in UT, but it's just general friendliness. I think there's one thing that is really funny but it's just a small example: At the hospital, men will practically break their necks to try and open a door for women, in fact, I've had men actually hit me with a door in their urgency to make sure I don't reach out and of my own power open the door. It's really nice to hold the door open for someone if you're going through but that's just hilarious. I saw this one woman the guy almost took her out and he's like pushing her out of the way and getting the door open for her. It was totally hilarious.

Though Lucia complained of an attitude in Salt Lake that women were expected to fill certain roles, differences like these were minimized by more positive differences like the one above. Alice also commented that even though the Temple Square tour was "a little odd to her," she just couldn't believe how nice people in Salt Lake are. When her dad visited he observed, "Even the kids say hello to you here!" As Betsy put it, "Even though I'm not Mormon, it's not a big negativity for me because basically they're nice people . . . it's not like a religious group where they're anti-social or something."

When asked what it was like for them in Salt Lake and what their expectations of Salt Lake were, most respondents emphasized the appeal of the outdoor atmosphere of Utah. This theme prevailed over any negative experiences respondents had had. The positive

difference of the beauty and recreational opportunities of Utah minimized the negative differences in Utah for most respondents.

These positive things compensate for the potentially negative differences, again minimizing those differences. Brian and Esther expressed a desire to leave Salt Lake and move to a rural area, something they were used to. Nevertheless, even though they did not like the city atmosphere, the organization of Salt Lake City made the city difference more bearable and minimized the effects of living in a city. "You can find your way around. I've found when I moved here . . . I was doing a lot of driving around in the dark, and I would have been a lot more lost in a new city without the fact that the streets are laid out on coordinates. It's a real appreciable change."

An effective way of minimizing differences and accepting them was for respondents to feel accepted themselves, to feel that their differences were accepted. Sophia found it hard when she first moved to Salt Lake because "sometimes they're [people in Salt Lake] kind of nice to you but you can tell they really don't mean it. They kind of check you out to see if you're the type they want to hang out with." She told of an experience where an LDS coworker was very accepting and friendly to her, but that when he found out she had no interest in the LDS church, he suddenly dropped the friendship. Sophia felt she was not accepted the way she was. In another workplace, Sophia felt that she would not have the right to say how she really felt, where an influential coworker could freely express her opinions since "her view's considered the one everyone should attain to, and if you're not doing that you're still an OK person, but she's right."

Several people I have talked to, both in interviews for this study and in more casual conversation with people outside of the study, have told me that they have often been asked what ward (name of a Mormon congregation) they are in. Either the assumption is that they are Mormon or the people asking are subtly (or not so subtly!) trying to find out if the people they are talking to are Mormon. This annoyed or even hurt people I talked to because it emphasized their differences. Beyond that, it signified that it mattered whether or not they were different, different in that way, the implication being that, if different in that way, one does not fit into the 'acceptable group'. Certain things cannot be shared with one who is not part of the 'acceptable group'; one's words or actions may now be suspect or assumed to mean something they do not necessarily mean. When their differences are emphasized, people tend to feel less accepted and find it harder to accept the differences in those who do not seem to accept them. The differences are emphasized instead of being minimized.

Eliminating the Difference

At least one partner in each of the couples mentioned that the Mormon influence did not affect them. Either it was not a part of their lives or it was not a big deal to them. It wasn't forced on them, so the difference was eliminated becoming a nonissue as far as accepting it. There is nothing to accept if there is nothing there. However, these same people were aware of the Mormon-dominated culture of Salt Lake—it was obvious to them; they just did not perceive it as affecting them. In response to my questions about moving to Salt Lake, questions about their expectations, about what it was like for them,

and how Salt Lake was different from their previous homes, most couples did not address the religious differences even though I had asked specifically for non-Mormon couples to interview. I inferred that the religious difference was either a nonissue or a minor issue for most of my respondents.

One couple answered affirmatively to my question, "The Mormon influence, even though it might have been shocking a little bit to know there were so many Mormons here, was maybe more subtle, like you wouldn't notice until you'd been here for awhile how heavily dominated it is?" Ian said about moving to Salt Lake to go to graduate school, "It was pretty much, it didn't seem that different, socially, any different than what I was used to, just even bigger university than, it was bigger than University of Arkansas student body-wise, but other than that, no different." At the time of the interview, Ian was out of school and working. His coworkers were mostly male, so he said it made it easy for him to fit it—difference was not an issue for him. Concluding her complaint that people in Salt Lake often cannot express their opinions or that everyone thinks the same, Sophia said, "I don't find it that big of a deal. Occasionally you notice it."

Dean shared many of Ian's feelings. When I asked him how he felt about moving to Utah, he said he was not even thinking about it. He was only thinking of his relationship with Lucia. He said it really would not matter to his happiness where he lived since he thinks about other things anyway and just adapts to where he is. According to Dean, "Frankly, it's all the same crap to me . . . there's a physical side to my life, a non-physical, it doesn't matter where I live. I'm going to find those things and they'll be different but they will essentially fill the same need for me."

Some differences may have been noticeable at first, but respondents easily got used to them, so that they were eliminated. When asked what the worst thing about living in Salt Lake was, Von and Betsy were aggravated when they first moved here to find that many businesses closed down earlier than they were used to, but they discounted that, saying they were used to it now. They also noticed when they first came that some businesses displayed pictures of LDS sites or leaders or that businesses carried greeting cards for Mormon celebrations. Betsy responded to that, "Anymore it's almost like the mountains. I thought I'd never take the mountains for granted and not notice they're there when I'm driving, but now . . . at first you'd see it in every business and now it's almost like you take it for granted and you don't even see it."

For the difference to remain a nonissue, it cannot be pushed on someone who does not share the difference. Erwin claimed he did not care if the Mormons killed chickens on Saturdays as long as they did not make him kill chickens on Saturday. Both he and his wife clarified that as long as different beliefs were not imposed on them, those different beliefs did not affect them and therefore were acceptable. Sophia and Ian worried when they were invited to a coworker's house for dinner that her coworker and her husband "were going to whip out the Book of Mormon and give us the whole heart-felt thing." That did not happen and the dinner turned out well, contributing to Sophia's and Ian's acceptance of the coworker's differences or even emphasizing the lack of a need to accept anything different.

Alice made the point that you cannot tell who is Mormon and who is not, so any difference is masked. She said, "I really haven't had a lot of close contact with a lot of

LDS like I thought I would, and if I did I didn't know they were LDS. You know you'd think they'd have LDS across their forehead or something but that's silly. You can't tell." Betsy commented that before moving to Salt Lake, they thought Mormons might look funny or wear funny hats, but said her husband, "not so much you can tell who's Mormon as who's not cause Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are both clean people."

Assimilating/Associating with the Difference

Changing oneself to fit the differences around one is an example of assimilating the difference so that it positively affects one's self-esteem and opportunities, or at least does not negatively affect them. The impetus for changing oneself may or may not be the actual difference itself. For someone who moves to Utah and converts to Mormonism, which is often the case, the Mormon culture difference is most likely the impetus. However some people change regardless, and coincidentally, the change coincides with what was once a difference. Dean and I had been discussing whether Salt Lake was different from where he used to live. He said it was different in every way, but when I asked if it still seemed different to him after living here for a little while, he had, in some ways, assimilated the differences because of changes he had naturally made.

Me: What about you—is Salt Lake different now that you've been here awhile?

Dean: I'm a completely different person so again I see everything from a very limited perspective but yah, my life is completely changed.

Me: Since coming here?

Dean: Um-uh [yes].

Me: But that's more because you've changed and less than . . .?

Dean: Yah, I've shifted gears. I went from being like this very impetuous, kind of spontaneous person to being dead, I guess. Very, very career oriented. My big concerns now are equity and how my stocks are doing and a 401K plan where four years ago I didn't know what 401 meant, it was the number after 400.

Me: Yah, I can relate to that. It's kind of like growing up I guess; I don't know.

Dean: Yah, I guess and that has nothing to do with Utah. It has to do with me turning 30 or something like that. When you're 30 you realize that I'm not going to be like this punk rocker for the rest of my life. I want to make a lot of money. I want to have certain things in my life that . . .

Me: Other things become important.

Dean: Absolutely. That's what has changed for me.

Me: Has it changed your perspective of Salt Lake, do you think?

Dean: Um, yah, now Salt Lake to me at least to me in my career, this is like a very growing and very open market so now Salt Lake to me represents this really good place to be for computers where when I moved here, I was like, "I don't know what kind of industry is there." It never would have even occurred to me that this is a decent market or it is a growing, shrinking, blah, blah, blah.

Dean viewed the differences in Salt Lake differently from when he first moved to Utah because his focus had changed as a result of other circumstances in his life. He had changed in such a way that Salt Lake did not represent an unaccepting environment for him. In fact the career culture represented a very accepting environment for him.

Betsy told of a social experience where they had socialized with a couple Betsy's husband worked with. The couple apparently were bitter about their experiences in Utah. Betsy's response to the couples' bitterness was "Well, gosh, why are they so bitter? It's kind of nice the things they [Mormons] do—they keep drunks off the roads by their strict drinking laws and we do not have to deal with the smoke [cigarette smoke in public places]." Betsy was more willing to accept differences in Salt Lake that may have resulted

from the Mormon influence because she did not agree with critics. In that way she accepted the difference by assimilating it.

Betsy also assimilated the differences she was experiencing in Salt Lake because she felt she could contribute to the society. She related her experience in going door-to-door to share religious messages about her religion and how she could spread hope through her efforts because the Salt Lake community was usually accepting of her message. She was allowed to contribute in her way:

> Betsy: You're mostly looking for people who really do want answers that they haven't been able to find.
>
> Me: So that you can be an answer to a prayer and be there for them.
>
> Betsy: Right.

Betsy and her husband also felt that living in Salt Lake had expanded their horizons. This made it easier to accept the differences because they had assimilated the differences, making them a part of their now more well-rounded lives.

> Betsy: I guess it wouldn't bother me to move back although I definitely prefer this area but if we had to move back, I think it's a great . . . made you a more well-rounded individual.
>
> Von: Well, there's people even here that haven't left the valley their whole lives so it doesn't matter where you grew up.
>
> Betsy: It's just expanding your horizons that I think is neat . . . I just think it's been a great move for us that way, even if we ever moved anywhere else, I'll always know about Mormons which I would have never gotten to know so I really enjoy it.

So if the difference becomes an opportunity to learn something new or make one's life fuller, the difference is an advantage that one wants to assimilate.

In addition, accepting the difference may give one the assurance that he or she is open-minded and respectful of difference, contributing to the motivation to accept the difference—at least superficially. Accepting the difference for this reason exemplifies associating with the difference, the acceptance of difference becoming a way to define oneself, a way to build one's self-esteem. Responding to my question, "Now that you've lived here for a little while, how do you see Salt Lake?" two couples described their efforts to get involved in the community, and specifically to learn about the Mormon church, since moving to Salt Lake. They gave examples of visiting Temple Square, the temples, and church historical sites. As Sean, a sporting goods salesman in his 20s, put it, "I mean we've embraced that part of the community, the LDS community to find out what it is about . . .. We're both pretty open-minded."

Respondents found it difficult to accept difference in Salt Lake when they tried to assimilate or associate with Salt Lakers and came up against walls. Brian, who expressed dislike for Salt Lake and a desire to leave, said that in most new social situations, when he was first meeting people, they would almost always ask him what ward (a Mormon congregation) he was in, assuming he was Mormon or maybe trying to find if he was Mormon without directly asking. He said that after responding that he is not Mormon, a wall automatically goes up, and they do not talk to him anymore. When asked what he had expected in moving to Salt Lake, he responded, "I was not expecting to be so excluded . . .." Brian talked a lot about being excluded and about how much he hated the question "What ward are you in?" because it always excluded him. He expressed that he had "been very, very, very discriminated against."

After asking Martina what the best and worst things about Salt Lake were, she said the worst thing was "maybe just some of the close-mindedness and people's unwillingness to consider new ideas." Martina felt like she could not openly express her opinions in her philosophy classes; she felt they were not accepted and that her classmates were not open to ideas outside their own: "a lot of times I just voice my opinions and that's probably not the smartest thing to do in Utah." She told of an experience where she had expressed an opinion in her class about unplanned pregnancy after which "people looked at me and they didn't talk to me for the rest of the day—I'm totally serious. We would have little breaks and people were like, 'She's weird.' And I'm just like, 'I need to get out of this state.'" Lack of acceptance and openness to her own ideas made Martina less accepting of the differences she faced in Salt Lake. Even if her opinions had differed from classmates' but had been accepted by them, Martina might have been more accepting of Salt Lake culture. One respondent felt like people in Salt Lake accepted her, but commented about a Mormon couple she knew, "they're fairly nice, at least to your face." Contributing to her acceptance of this couple's religious differences would have been an assurance of where she stood with them, an assurance that they were sincere, perhaps even sincere regardless of their feelings for her.

Betsy experienced an opposite response in Salt Lake which made it easier for her to associate with Salt Lakers and accept the differences in Salt Lake. She says,

> Well one thing that is kind of neat is that Witnesses [Jehovah's Witnesses] from where we were from were kind of perceived as odd or like something that you wouldn't . . it almost comes as a stigma, being a Witness and here most Mormons like when they tell you where they served their mission or they'll come right out an ask you, "Are you Mormon?" And I say, "No, I'm Jehovah's Witness." It's

> usually a positive reaction because anywhere—well, I've only been to Ohio—but in that area, it was usually not a positive reaction. It was kind of like, "Oh, you're weird," kinda. And here it's like, "Oh!" almost accepting like almost like you're one of us kinda. It's different, it's opposite.

Finding acceptance for her own differences, especially when she had not experienced acceptance, where she had previously lived, made Betsy more accepting of the differences in Salt Lake. She expressed a desire to stay in Salt Lake in spite of other differences in Salt Lake that she feared or did not like.

Transcending the Difference

One respondent, in some situations, had felt special for being different from the Mormon majority in Salt Lake, or she felt she was perceived as having something desirable. When she was single, she had dated Mormon men who felt that she stood out because she was not LDS. She observed that "they thought that made me sort of special somehow and different from what they were used to." She did not feel this way in every situation, but this positive experience helped transcend the differences she faced in Salt Lake.

Learning about the difference so that it becomes interesting also makes the difference more acceptable. The difference is transcended, remaining as a difference, but not one that negatively affects self and opportunities. Sophia claimed she thought she knew more about Temple Square than people who have lived in Salt Lake for 20 years. She had researched the church on the Internet, and she expressed interest in and approval of the temples: "Oh, that [Manti Temple] was really cool." Betsy, who several times expressed satisfaction with living in Salt Lake, claimed to have talked to many Mormons about their

religion through the door-to-door contacts she made to share her religious messages. About the Mormon religion, she said, "I know quite a bit more, and their belief system. And a lot of that comes from talking to them."

For respondents who liked new things, the Mormon difference in Salt Lake was interesting and positive. For example, two respondents thought it was neat that the Mormon church keeps so many genealogical records and has so many resources for learning about one's genealogy. Ian was intrigued with peoples' personal stories of conversion so the differences he encountered in Salt Lake through Mormon influences interested him instead of repelling him. Rather than being minimized, the potential negativity of the Mormon difference was transcended in these cases.

Through the interviews, I discovered another way of transcending a difference that has helped me accept difference. The juxtaposition of listening to people talk who do not share many of my religious experiences and at the same time, reflecting on my own religious experiences made me remember that I do not often imagine what it would be like to have never had those experiences. Some things, like the Mormon temple experience, are not only very familiar to me, taken for granted, and part of my paradigm, they are also a big part of my life. Those same things are unfamiliar to others, so not a part of their lives, even though we seem so similar on the surface. Not only are some of those Mormon experiences so familiar to me, they also are very meaningful and emotional to me.

I noticed in the interviews that to compensate for our lack of shared experience and try to relate better with my interviewees, I adopted a tone of disinterest. For example

when the conversation would turn to Mormon temples, a sacred subject for me, I would restrain myself from talking about the temple because I did not want to alienate my interviewees by "letting out" my true feelings about temples. These emotional feelings have both sentimental roots, because of my heritage, and personal roots, because of my religious experiences. I feel weak and vulnerable when I reveal any emotion that those I am interacting with do not share, regardless of the cause of the emotions. My emotions, I assume, will most likely be misunderstood anyway.

Realizing how deep some of my feelings are and realizing how unaware others may be of the impact certain subjects have on me, has made me realize how little I likely know about what other people feel and experience. When I remember it, this realization helps me to better transcend any differences others may have in their experiences, their attitudes, their ideas, their beliefs because underlying those differences are certainly some feelings and experiences I do not conceive of. In reference to Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's experience with the Meratus baby, she says "When I returned to the United States, it was impossible for me to see American ideas about mothering and childbirth with the same eyes . . .. This time I found myself as astounded by American assumptions as I had been by the Meratus scene . . ." (118). Realizations like Tsing's lead to awareness of how self or culture constructs what is acceptable. Recognition of underlying causes of difference transcends the difference. Difference is potentially accepted because what is acceptable is not taken for granted as the natural "way things are."

Accepting Difference Using Several Methods

Some responses incorporated several or all of the methods listed above to accept difference.

Difference is acceptable if the difference does not induce fear, fear of losing opportunities or fear of one's self-esteem being attacked, fear of not being acceptable. This may be because the difference is minimized, eliminated, assimilated, or transcended. For example, Betsy was afraid to go door to door sharing religious messages (an integral part of her religion) in dominantly Mormon communities because she did not know anything about Mormons: "It was really scary when I moved out here because I didn't know any of the beliefs . . .. I knew nothing about the Mormon religion, I didn't know anything what they believed so I was like, 'What are these people going to come up with . . . ?" But once she had had several encounters with Mormons, the differences she had anticipated with fear were minimized: "And it does take a little while to get to know their different beliefs and where they're coming from, and now it's pretty easy to talk to them. But it was kind of scary for me." In addition when she met so many Mormons who could relate with her experiences of going door to door sharing religious messages, Betsy could associate with that difference.

Ironically, Sophia was more accepting of the normalized culture in Salt Lake because, as she perceived it, she was the one who was different from the norm. She claimed she would be weird no matter where she lived. Observing that her coworkers think she is weird, she added, "but I am really weird so I don't mind." She transcended the differences in Salt Lake by claiming the status of the different one. Her attitude also minimized the

differences in Salt Lake; her already existing self-identity was simply confirmed. Similarly, Betsy felt good about her acceptance in Salt Lake because she was used to getting negative reactions in her home state when she told people her religion. Even though religiously she is not part of the dominant culture in Salt Lake, she felt less different (less weird) in Salt Lake than she did in her hometown. This made it easier for her to be the minority, to be the different one. Again this confirmation of her self-identity helped her both transcend and minimize the dominant differences.

Barriers to Accepting Difference

When a difference cannot be minimized, eliminated, assimilated, or transcended, the difference is not acceptable. A prevalent example of this is the role emotion played in the interviews. In my discussion on transcending difference through realizing we do not share all the same experiences and feelings, I told how I avoided showing emotions that would not be common with my respondents; sharing these emotions would have made it harder for them to accept my different experiences. The respondents did the same thing, tending to downplay negative emotional experiences with Mormons or, in one man's case, to constantly apologize when he did show strong emotion. And in fact, his partner would explain for him when he did.

> Brian: I hate Salt Lake, I'm sorry. I've lived in bigger cities, I have never felt so oppressed as I do here. I don't know why, I just can't stand it. And, you know, everybody . . . my personal belief . . . I feel it's the LDS church! She [his partner] knows that . . . I mean, I'm over dramatizing a little bit but yah, it's pretty clear cut.
>
> Esther: He's had some work-related experiences that have had to do with his not being a part of that religion or culture.

Displays of emotion do not as easily allow a difference to be minimized, eliminated, assimilated, or transcended. Displays of emotion from a third-party tend to force or at least strongly invite involvement from others, yet they alienate when the emotions are not shared, preventing even assimilation. Display of emotion potentially leads to more difficulty in accepting the differences that generate the emotions. One interviewee summarized the feelings of her and her partner after he told about the display of negative emotion of some Mormon people he knew: "There are always I guess zealots out to protect the fine points," Using the label *zealots* and the word *fine* implied the unacceptability of emotion.

The depth of an emotional experience with a difference also affects how well the difference is accepted. Two interviewees had close family members who were Mormons; these two interviewees expressed more emotion about the Mormon church than any of the other interviewees. Of all the interviewees, they were the only ones who expressed a desire to leave Salt Lake. Even their partners, who did not have close family members in the Mormon church, did not express a desire to leave. Their experiences with the Mormon church and the Mormon culture were at a deeper emotional level than the experiences of the others. Not only were their experiences with the church largely negative, but also more emotional.

Possibly the identities of these two interviewees were more closely related with the church, so when they did not fit into the church, they were closer to the mentality that places those outside the church outside of the 'acceptable group'. They were more sensitive to the hegemony that exists in Salt Lake City. Minimizing, eliminating, or

transcending the differences in Salt Lake proved more difficult for them because the differences had great impact on their lives. Associating with or assimilating the differences may have also seemed difficult or impossible because the barriers were more obvious to these two than they were to everyone else.

What Makes Difference Acceptable: a Summary

Minimizing, assimilating, transcending, and eliminating are all ways that differences lose their negativity, or even make the transition from being differences to becoming part of one's paradigm. Whether one looks at a difference from a Judgmental perspective or a Reactive perspective, the difference must be negotiated in one of these ways to become acceptable. However, the perspective makes a difference in how the difference is mediated, no matter which method is used.

For example, when one does not notice a difference, which minimizes the difference, it could be because the difference belongs to an unacceptable group that does not threaten the acceptability of the 'acceptable group'. Thus from the Judgmental perspective, this difference is acceptable. However a difference can also be unnoticeable from the Reactive perspective because the 'acceptable group' is not open about not accepting another group's ideas. (If the 'acceptable group' does accept the ideas of an unacceptable group, that group is no longer unacceptable.)

CONCLUSION

This Ethnographer's Perspective of Self: The Birth of a Study

My background includes experiences in both Mormon and non-Mormon cultures. Growing up I attended schools where I was the only Mormon in the school (that I knew of) and most people I knew had never heard of Mormons before meeting me or my family. I also attended schools in small towns in Utah that were at least 90% Mormon. In environments where there were few Mormons, my family quickly became friends with other people who were Mormons, even if they did not live close by. My attitude growing up was that I was different from most people, that my way of living, though in many aspects it was the best possible way to live, was strange to most people. I felt a need to protect myself, even hide. My mom told me stories of Mormon pioneers who were harassed and persecuted for their religion, stories that my child mind internalized, fearing that the time would come when I would have to endure the same types of persecution. In spite of these fears, I felt comfortable with my friends (non-Mormon), and even felt comfortable discussing religion with them in our childish ways. When my family moved to Utah, a classmate asked me what religion I was. I nervously responded by asking her if she had ever heard of Mormons. To my relief and shock, she exclaimed "Of course I've heard of Mormons. We're all Mormons!" In disbelief, I looked around the room and asked again if everyone there really was Mormon. Again I questioned her, pointing to a few people, asking specifically if they were Mormon. She continued to respond in the

affirmative. I had never conceived of such a society and kept looking around me in disbelief. Suddenly a burden was lifted because suddenly there was nothing to hide; I did not have to hide the fact that I was different, did not have to risk being found out and persecuted.

Ironically though, moving to a small town, after having been an army brat turned out to be the hardest for me to adjust to. It did not matter that I was Mormon—I still did not fit in. Perhaps I was backwards socially, but for whatever reason, the small, predominately Mormon towns did not provide a completely comfortable environment. Nevertheless, church was always comfortable. For me, the religion and the culture were always separate. Thus my fear of being found out as "weird Mormon" transitioned into being found out as a Mormon but *still* weird! As I have matured, I have adjusted socially and am even comfortable in a wide variety of social situations. Yet among some Mormon social groups there is still an insecurity that I will be found out as someone who is a little strange—not quite a real Mormon, and among non-Mormons there is still an insecurity that I will be found out as one of those Mormons. At parties where I am likely to be the only Mormon, I try to get to know a few people first and express what I perceive as non-stereotypical Mormon ideas and opinions, in the hopes that when they discover my Mormon status, they will not automatically stereotype me. Yet when I am with some groups of Mormons, I sometimes feel unworthy, uncouth, and tainted.

The perceptions of what Mormonism stands for and what it means often seem to directly conflict with the ideals propagated at the University of Utah, especially among some of my fellow graduate students. It is not unusual for some of my classmates and

colleagues to make comments in class or at get-togethers that reveal an assumption that Mormonism is outdated, oppressive, stupid, even bad, and in short, simply wrong. Comments that criticize and make fun of sacred aspects of my life are acceptable in these groups, and sometimes when a comment is made, the speaker will look at me while others avoid my gaze and the atmosphere becomes tense. In my experience, some of my colleagues seem to feel sorry for me for being "blind," assume I am naive and would not understand certain things, watch what they say around me. There seem to be walls I will never penetrate. It seems that I cannot express my real opinions in class without being judged and looked down on, that I will never be able to fully explain myself, and in fact that I constantly have a need to explain myself. For example, I wondered if some of my colleagues tried to conceal from me the fact that one of them is gay because the Mormon church teaches that homosexuality is not a healthy lifestyle. I have felt frustrated trying to prove that it did not matter to me, without bringing it up.

My childhood fears have been realized in minor but interesting ways. In the Introduction I quoted Gonzalez, Houston, and Chen: "As Geertz points out in Local Knowledge, we often treat our cultural knowledge as common sense, as something 'natural' beyond question," (xvi). Ironically my perspective is that I am often criticized for being trapped in my Mormon cultural knowledge, but because those who are critical are trapped by their cultural knowledge, I can never prove myself otherwise. According to my perspective, there is little sympathy for me because my religious culture is dominant in Salt Lake City, because I represent the oppressor. Guilt for not being a "good person" according to what is acceptable within a certain situation, such as among some graduate

students, and for feeling oppressed even though I am the oppressor, contributes to my tension. In addition, whether or not I am accepted varies depending on what it is popular to think and depending on how the Mormon church is represented, which of its characteristics is emphasized, or what rhetoric is used to describe its characteristics.

In trying to make sense of my experiences, I assumed that some people have responded negatively to the Mormon church because they have felt ostracized, because they have experienced marginalization from members of the Mormon church. When I hear comments in my classes like "People around here think we're [implied non-Mormons] evil," or when friends talk about the frustration of moving here and suddenly feeling like there was something wrong with them because they drink alcoholic beverages or because they do not attend a Mormon church, I assume it is hard for non-Mormons to feel accepted here. Many of the groups I have been in where I am the only Mormon have seemed to me to be an outlet for members of that group to safely express their frustrations. Talking with Mormon friends, many of them have expressed many of the same feelings. Thus this study arose out of my curiosity about why I felt the way I did and why the conflicts that I have witnessed exist. I took the perspective that everyone wants to be accepted, and everyone feels like they are trying to be accepting, that no one really wants to hurt anyone. Somehow that hurt occurs anyway. I wanted to get closer to the bottom of that issue which has further led to my interest in what makes difference acceptable.

From this study I have learned how unique, yet how common, my perspective is, unique because of the unique combination of social situations in which I engage and

common because of the shared human experience of seeking acceptance. The unique combination of social situations in which I engage has given me a unique perspective. Conducting this study helped me realize that my assumptions about what it feels like to be non-Mormon or Mormon may apply to very few people. Referring back to Arjun Appadurai's use of the suffix *-scape* to describe relations that "are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors," I have learned more about my self-scape through this ethnographic work. More specifically I have learned that no one experiences the exact social/self-scape that I do (329).

However, I have much in common with others. In the introduction, I quoted Kerr who discussed the need/desire people may feel to avoid individuality if it conflicts with or even destroys "togetherness" with other people in the 'acceptable group'. I share this tendency with others; in fact this study was in part an attempt to come to terms with the alienation I feel from what is acceptable, to understand better how I can achieve togetherness with the 'acceptable group', but maintain my individuality.

Acceptance Can Be Learned

As Stuart Hall argues, "'difference' is both necessary and dangerous" ("The Spectacle of the 'Other' 234). Difference is necessary because it helps us construct meaning and in fact construct what is acceptable, but ironically at the same time, it threatens the maintenance of the 'acceptable group'. Accepting difference may make it possible to use difference to construct meaning but not be threatened by it. Understanding both that there

may be some generalizable categories of factors that make differences acceptable and the process that happens to make those differences acceptable could lead to ways of preventing prejudice and marginality.

This study adds depth to Hall's argument: though difference can be necessary and dangerous, it can also be acceptable and nonthreatening. This research reveals specific ways that differences can be acceptable and nonthreatening. The six interviews explicated in this paper refine the question *What causes prejudice against difference?* shifting focus to the question *What makes difference acceptable?* Not only is culture hybrid and fluid as Clifford demonstrates, but acceptance of culture, more specifically of differences, is also fluid and hybrid, a fact that leads to questions about how to learn to accept difference. For example, the most common form of acceptance found in the responses was minimizing. A difference was minimized when it had been encountered before which implies that acceptance levels could have changed from the first time the difference was encountered to the second time. Since acceptance levels are not fixed but can be changed, it seems likely that they can be learned. Further research could reveal how, within the limits of either the Judgmental or the Reactive perspective, to teach or learn how to minimize, eliminate, assimilate, or overcome difference without minimizing, eliminating, assimilating, or overcoming those who represent difference.

Contributing to the insightful, meaningful ethnographies of Tsing and Stewart is this ethnographically-based study which adds an analytical dimension to the questions of identity and culturally-situated knowledge raised by Tsing and Stewart. Their work articulately reveals that identities and knowledge are not inherent but are culturally-

situated and continually being formulated. A good example is Tsing's assertion, "Amazement denaturalizes . . . ," which she demonstrates with the story of the pin-up girls. She witnessed a scene where a Meratus man brought home a pin-up calendar. Everyone at home was amazed, finding the photos incomprehensible. Tsing argues that "Meratus do not imagine an eroticism that depends on objectification of female body parts," a phenomenon that is naturalized in much of Western culture (229). Tsing's story shows that eroticism that depends on objectification of female body parts is naturalized, not natural. The denaturalization of my feelings of alienation described in this paper is another example adding to Tsing's. My results also point to ways that acceptance of difference can become naturalized.

Accepting Difference by Developing I-You[1] Relationships

Martin Buber discusses interpersonal relationships in terms of *I-You* relationships and *I-It* relationships. *I* and *You* stand in relation to each other and are reciprocal (58). In the *I-You* relationship, the qualities of the other person are subjected to the reality that that person relates with self and is like self as far as her or her humanity. Though the *I-You* relationship itself can be experienced, Buber says *You* cannot be sought after or experienced; only *It* can be sought after or experienced as an object (see 59 and 62). *It* has boundaries and borders (64). If a quality is extracted from the loose bundle of qualities in *You*, *You* is no longer *You*—*You* cannot be placed somewhere without becoming *It* (60).

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1 Though the common translation of Buber's I and Thou uses the word *thou*, the translation from which I quoted uses the word *you*.

At a more concrete level, one must get to know the 'Other' and relate with the 'Other', seeing parts of himself in the other person and visa versa for the 'Other' to become *You*. When another person is *You*, the relation between *I* and *You* defies stereotyping and even typing. The other person is no longer definable while *It* remains, like a stereotype, definable by its qualities (59).

With the advantage of a perspective of the 'Other' that defies definition by qualities and recognizes the other person's humanity as equal to self, difference becomes naturalized. And as the *I-You* perspective is extended to others even when the *I-You* relationship has not occurred, acceptance of difference becomes naturalized. Problems of prejudice, marginality, and lack of acceptance are more likely to disappear. Two items emerge as steps toward this understanding. One is to develop new ways of knowing through contact with people or groups of people who represent differences, through development of *I-You* relationships, for example, to have open and personal dialogue, especially where prejudice or fear might exist. The other is to carry forward the experiences of *I-You* relationships to form an assumption that creating *I-You* relationships with any person or group of people would also produce new ways of knowing. The point is to recognize the *You* in the 'Other', aside from the loose bundle of qualities in *It*, to accept the 'Other' as a kindred human being regardless of whether one accepts every quality in the 'Other'. As Buber says, "Hatred remains blind by its very nature; one can only hate part of a being" (68). Thus hatred of a *whole* person is impossible. In most cases, respondents accepted differences after they had learned more about them. Before coming to Utah many real and perceived differences seemed unacceptable to several of

the respondents. They related some of the negative comments they had received from their friends after making their decision to move to Utah. However, in coming to Utah, the differences became acceptable as respondents developed relationships with Salt Lake neighbors and coworkers and had exposure to Salt Lake City's differences.

In places outside of Salt Lake City, I often experience the *It* of the *I-it* relationship when people find out I am Mormon. However, here in the Salt Lake City religious environment the distinction between who is *It* and who is *I* is blurry, engendering an atmosphere where I have a unique double perspective of interpersonal communication. The fluidity and hybridity of my perspective has given me vision for the opportunity to overcome *I-It* barriers. It has taught me the importance of forming *I-You* relationships across cultures. These lessons have been learned mostly because I have formed *I-You* relationships. Even if I have not formed *I-You* relationships with everyone I come in contact with, I can apply these lessons to others.

Forming *I-You* relationships potentially affects one's self-identity as the new-found relationship opens a new aspect of the self-scape: the place where two identities overlap. And a change in self-identity changes one's acceptance levels; it changes how one constructs difference; it changes ways of knowing. If one see herself as part of the 'acceptable group' or if she feels that others see her as acceptable, she may accept differences willingly because her positive self-identity is not threatened. The difference is not constructed as dangerous. In many of the interviews, much of the decision to accept difference revolved around how the difference affected self-esteem. For example, Martina was not very accepting of political differences she observed in one of her classes because

the expression of her political views cost her what she perceived as disapproving stares from her classmates. Formation of an *I-You* relationship through open dialogue between Martina and a classmate may have developed into a realization for both that even if they do not share political views, they know why the other believes the way he or she does. A respectful dialogue may have developed into a realization to Martina that her classmate does not view Martina as unacceptable, or a realization for the classmate that Martina does not view her or him as unacceptable. Self-identify may have changed or expanded for both as their identities overlapped through the text of their dialogue.

The process I described in the introduction is circular, that is, the 'acceptable group' becomes the oppressor, the group that does not accept difference, so those outside of that group do not accept those within. Part of my perspective, my identity and selfscape, results from experiencing fear that I will not be accepted because I represent the 'acceptable group'. I fear not being accepted because I represent those who do not accept. No matter what my situation is, my self-identity will reflect aspects of the dominant and the 'Other', a fact that lends more encouragement to the idea that acceptance of difference can be naturalized as *I-You* relationships are formed where overlapping self-identities reveal ways that differences can be minimized, eliminated, assimilated, or overcome.

APPENDIX

INFORMED CONSENT

Purpose. The following study conducted by Anne-Marie Waddell involves research, the purpose of which is to examine, through interviews and participant observation, the attitudes and experiences of non-Mormon couples who have immigrated to Salt Lake City within the last five years after living in a culture where the Mormon culture was not dominant.

Procedures. The procedures for this study will include our participation in tape-recorded interviews.

Duration. The interviewing period will last 3–4 months (sometime between Jan and April 1998). It is anticipated that there will be 2–3 interviews per couple, and each interview will last approximately 1–2 hours.

Confidentiality. The researcher will maintain my confidentiality by:

- using pseudonyms instead of real names in interview and field notes (There will be no code list created to relate the pseudonyms to the real individuals.)
- providing only enough demographic information to show we fit the necessary requirements to fit into the population sample
- before releasing them to a third party (anyone besides the researcher and us), letting us read and listen to the interview notes, field notes, and tape recordings that pertain to one or both of us and edit items that one or both of us feel jeopardize our confidentiality. (The researcher will send by certified mail or hand-deliver to us a hard copy of the interview and field notes and recordings of the interviews.)
- maintaining only one electronic copy on a disc of information that has been edited and keeping that disc in the hands of the researcher. The information would only be used by the researcher to make general comments or to help her form her thinking.
- maintaining only two tape-recorded copies of information that has been edited. One tape will be ours, and the other will be kept in the hands of the researcher. The information would only be used by the researcher to make general comments or to help her form her thinking

Risks. Because identities of participants will be confidential, there are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research. However, there may be some psychological discomfort associated with answering some of the interview questions that one or both of us may perceive as sensitive questions. Because of this, Anne-Marie

Waddell will provide us with the interview questions before the interview, and we may withdraw from the study at any time as per the paragraph below.

Benefits. Findings of this study will be available to us.

Withdrawal. Our participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which we are otherwise entitled. We may discontinue participation at any time without loss of care or benefits to which we would otherwise be entitled. Refusal in any written or verbal form to participate in the study constitutes our withdrawal from the study. If one of us withdraws from the study, this constitutes withdrawal by both of us.
We may also refuse to answer any of the interview questions at our discretion.

Concerns. We or my representative may contact the researcher, Anne-Marie Waddell " 322-4211, for answers to any questions we have about the research or related matters. In case of injury, breach of confidentiality, or other concern that cannot be discussed with the researcher, we can contact the General University Institutional Review Board (GUIRB) office " 581-5382 or the Vice President for Research " 581-7236.

Consent. We have understood the material in this document, and we have received a copy of it.

_____ _____
Signature: Date:

_____ _____
Signature: Date:

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